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or all of us caught up in this crazy world of dirt bikes it's got to be one of the most magically moving moments imaginable - the glorious nanosecond when you realise the baton has been passed on, the gene has survived into the next generation and that your work on this planet is effectively done! What, you may very well be thinking, is he frikkin' on about now? Or, more likely, just what is he frikkin' on?

Well I'm on about possibly the most important, life-defining moment of parenthood. None, none of that first word and first step malarkey here, I'm talking about the first time the fruit of your loins manages to twist a throttle and stay upright on two wheels! For me it came at Motorcycle Live when my darling daughter Hazel finally got to grips with two wheels and an engine thanks in no small part to the incredible patience of Paul Cowshall and the Suzuki Off-Road Experience.

Due to reasons beyond my control I've never had the chance to teach her myself and after a brief attempt in the summer - again with those fine folk in yellow - Hazel was finally up and running on, appropriately enough, Dirt Day at the NEC. Success only came after some serious whisky throttling - she even managed to stuff a teenage lad on a 125 into the inflatable barrier with an instinctive block pass - but I could see the exact moment everything clicked into place. To be honest if she hadn't managed any sort of solo flight I wouldn't have cared but she was so proud of herself and that's what I buzzed off.

It's been a busy month with Motorcycle Live following fairly hot on the heels of the International Dirt Bike Show. I thought Stoneleigh was a really positive show - there was a great atmosphere, lots of visitors and a real upbeat feel. The NEC Show is a totally different audience and they're a lot harder to engage with. In fact, at times it felt a little like we were exhibits. So why bother? Especially when the Dirt Bike Show was such a cracker. Well our reasoning is simple - the more people we can turn on to off-road riding the bigger the knock-on effect to the whole off-road industry will be. And that's got to be good for everyone.

My tenure at the NEC was punctuated by a return to our Morecambe HQ and then a whistle-stop tour of the badlands of Suffolk where I hung out for a couple of days with Jake Nicholls and Steve Potter to prepare the off-season fitness guide that kicks off in this 'ere issue. It's easy to watch top-flight motocross and take for granted how fit the riders are so it was good for me to see - and experience - first hand just how hard Jake and Steve work

These days top-flight riders need more than sublime throttle control and a big pair of hairy boys, they have to be world-class athletes. Compared to the current pool of off-road journos I'd like to think I'm in pretty good shape. My mid-life crisis means I spend plenty of time in the gym, I'm unbeaten along the Lancaster to Morecambe cyclepath (apart from this one bloke on a racer) and as long as I can keep away from the booze I've reached a stage where I can stay off the Bensons n'all. But after 15 minutes of what Steve assured me was 'mild' circuit training I was breathing out my arse.

Anyways, starting this month you too can have Steve as your personal trainer. So follow his exercise plan, take his advice on what you stuff in your gob, don't cheat (too much) and come March you'll be lining up for the new season knowing you're in great shape.

With Jake off to Holland to race for Jacky Martens it left a pretty big hole in Roger Magee's team. So he filled it. With Elliott Banks-Browne. Which would have been all fine and dandy but for the fact Elliott's existing DB Racing Honda team were under the impression that he'd already re-signed with them for 2012. Whether he had or he hadn't, it sucks for David Bright and his team after working so hard and with such great passion to produce a super-fast bike and the right environment for a young, talented and ambitious rider like Elliott to thrive in. But if I was young, talented and ambitious and was pretty much out of the blue offered a GP ride would I take it? In a heartbeat - and, be honest, so would you.

DB Racing are one of the most genuine teams in the paddock and I feel for them losing their star rider so late in the season. But first with Nev Bradshaw and then with Elliott they've shown they can produce champions. And I'm sure they will again.

Right! That's enough hot air for another month and another year! Happy Christmas to all our readers and here's to a flat-out, WFO 2012...



he Bercy Supercross was another shock-a-minute orgy of bar-banging racing, FMX-funanigans and sweet-ass dancing girl sensory overload that saw Kyle Chisholm run 2-1-3 over the three nights to claim the overall victory ahead of Eli Tomac (1-2-5) and Jake Weimer (3-11-2). But forget all about the results because the big story of the weekend was all about the bad blood between Justin Barcia and hometown hotshot Gregory Aranda that saw a plethora of theatrics thrown inside the Palais de Omnisports on 'Saturday night.

It basically all kicked off when Aranda got a bit buck wild coming out of turn one in one of the Course à l'Américaine sprint races and in turn sideswiped Bam Bam who fell over, waited a lap for the Frenchman and then forced him to a stop and flipped that fecker off! Aranda didn't like, the crowd didn't like and after giving it Billy Bignuts a super-scared Bam Bam beat it back to the pits before he was lynched by the Bud Racing Kawasaki star and his army of French fans. Because of his actions Barcia was 'banned' for the night by the French Federation – mostly for his own safety – but bounced back on Sunday afternoon to take the win.

Although Dean Wilson was there soaking up the atmosphere the only British racer actually racing was Tommy Searle who got

the call up to replace injured CLS Kawasaki team-mate Christophe

Pourcel at the very last minute. Pretty much unprepared and never in contention for the win, Tommy Gun still gave it his all, kept it shiny side up and gave the Brits abroad - and us armchair fans watching on Motors TV – someone to cheer for. As well as being a badass at Bercy Tommy also scored some serious sweetie pie points with the girls – and also The Bear - here at DBR HQ when he tweeted 'I'm sure @jeremykyle needs to get his lie detector test sorted - he's ruining lives this week'. What a caring young man!

A lack of daylight hours, the cold weather and Jesus' birthday celebrations blow a big hole in the off-road events calendar with the upcoming highlights including the 86th annual Wild n' Woolly on Boxing Day which moves to Airfield Farm in Market Harborough for the first time ever. The extreme hare n' hound style race action at this charity event kicks off at 11am.

Almost two weeks later than that the Sheffield Indoor Trial will take place indoors at a venue in Sheffield. Did I mention it's a trial? Anyhoo, the Motorpoint Arena is the place to be at 7pm on January 7 for an invitational international that stars multi-taskin' Dougie Lampkin MBE, Toni Bou, Adam Raga, Takahisa Fujinami, Jeroni Fajardo, James Dabill, Michael Brown and Jack Challoner basically everyone you'd wanna see in a four-hour, action-packed feet-up frenzy. Tickets are available now so call **0114 256 5656** or head online to









www.motorpointarena.co.uk.

I'weekend after that The Tough One is back back at Nantmawr Quarry and back in the dark too which by my reckoning makes it a trifecta of back. The 2012 event will be the eighth running of the UK's toughest race and a full day of activities are planned starting at 11am and finishing at around tea time. A top line-up is being organised as we speak and Jack Burnicle should also be back on the mic as master of ceremonies - sick! For more details keep an eye on www.worevents.com.

Now this here Newshound may have a big appetite for all the latest off-road happenings but I've also been known to sink my terrid teeths canine and otherwise - into the occasional Little Chef plateful of brekkie goodness. I even have a sat-nav setting so I can sniff out Charlie wherever I may be unless, that is, I happen to be trucking southbound along the A12 just east of Ipswich. Possibly the world's only motocross-themed roadside eatery in a converted bus, Steve Potter's Holeshot Café is a three Pirelli star establishment and the breakfasts, baps and burgers are the b*llocks. Although the locals are a bit strange.

It's still officially on the down low from the ACU but Ashley Wilde and Jamie Law have apparently won the top privateer awards in the 2011 Maxxis British Motocross Championships with Mancunian Ashley taking the MX2 trophy and Cumbria's #1

Guy Martin impersonator - that's J-Law - the one in Privateers Cup into what they call the Evolution MX1. While nobody's quite sure what they've actually won both riders are still pretty pumped

"It feels good to be getting noticed and it makes all the hard work worthwhile," reckons Ashley.
"Working full-time in the week and having to train at night is tough but it also makes me determined to beat the people who seem to always end up getting to ride on teams. Being named privateer of the year is a little pat on the back and it's shown me that hard work does pay off."

And Jamie agrees. "When I opened the envelope and saw the British Champion MX1 class privateer certificate with my name on I just kind of laughed it off and went to work," claims the Cumbrian bug crusher. "The more I thought about it that day the better the feeling got. I have to admire the ACU for recognising the efforts of the privateers - I work on my own bikes, have to find time to ride and train as well as work 9-5. That makes beating the pro rides a whole lot sweeter and I think beating them at the weekend gives me the drive to do it all over again Monday to Friday.

While the ACU should be applauded for setting this series within a series up I reckon they could still go a lot further in making the Privateers Cup a more enticing prospect for racers who are doing it out of their own pocket which in turn would also create more of a spectacle for race fans.

As an example the BSB series has evolved its

class that basically allows teams and individuals running lower specification bikes to enter the BSB at a reduced rate. These riders run different coloured front number boards so they stand out on the track during the race then get their own prize giving ceremony afterwards - not only does this help make it abundantly clear who's eligible for the series but keeps rider and fan interest high throughout the season.

So if riders like Ashley and Jamie can't realistically compete with full-time pros who are armed with the best machinery around then maybe it would be cool to see them and riders like them get more recognition for their efforts. "I agree that the ACU should make a bigger deal of awards like this," adds Ash. "All the privateers in the Maxxis build their whole week around racing - the hours put in during the week by my family are crazy. I'm lucky enough that they're behind me 100 per cent and I'm also fortunate to have my long-time friend Martyn helping out with the bikes during the week and also at the weekend. Different number boards or separate prizes would be an awesome thing to do

as it would give the privateers a real goal to chase." So how about it ACU Events people? How about taking this good idea of yours and making it great? A championship for registered privateers within the main Maxxis championship it really wouldn't be that hard...





SOCKET SET WORTH OVER £200...

hile it used to be de rigueur to attack your dirt bike between motos with tools no more complex than a pair of pipe grips and a lump hammer times have changed, bikes have changed and thankfully tools have changed too and so it's now possible to get perfect-fit, professional-quality tools

– like this Britool Expert socket set – at an affordable price.

Inside a sweet-ass socket set like this you'll normally find pretty much everything you need to work on your modern dirt bike (except for spanners, pipe grips and a lump hammer) including those horrible Torx things that KTM are so keen on at the moment - bleurgh! Seriously though, a socket set like this is way handy to own especially if that

douche bag in the 60-grand motorhome next door ain't so keen on lending one of his socket sets out. We've all been there on the borrow, it happens.

So there are two things you can do at this point A) head along to www.britool.com and buy yo'sen a sweet-ass socket set or B) enter our free to enter competition where if you're lucky you could get a sweet-ass socket set sent out to you in January for absolutely nowt.

To be in with a chance of being person B and winning this pukka prize all you have to do is answer this really easy question – in which year some six years before the start of the First World War did the British Tool and Engineering Company (the company that launched the Britool

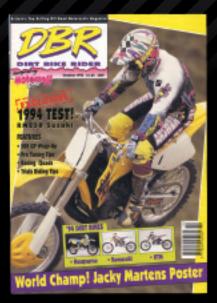
brand) start producing tools and tings?

Is it: A: 1908 B: 1975 C: 2001 D: 2011

If you know the answer then may we suggest you need to head online to www.dirtbikerider.com, log on and head to the competitions page then fill in the fields and hit transmit. The competition closes on January 12 and the winner – who'll be drawn at random from the massive pile of correct entries - will win the socket set provided The Bear hasn't borrowed it to construct a crib (he's expecting the tiny patter of little The Bears in the New Year – awwww)!



RANDOM TRAWL THROUGH THE IRT BIKE RIDER ARCHIVES



October 1993:

There's not a four-stroke in sight as Rob Andrews makes the cover testing the '94 RM250 while inside the evergreen Jack Burnicle gets to grips with the epic race for the 1993 world 500cc title between Jake Nicholls' new team boss Jacky Martens and super Swede Jorgen Nilsson. We also catch up with exciting American Tallon Vohland and take a close look at the latest enduro weapons from KTM and Husqvarna.



March 1997:

Fast forward a few years and there's another RM250 on the cover - this time in the hands of Greg Albertyn as he races to his maiden AMA SX win. Inside Paul Malin chats to the slightly lessergreen Jack Burnicle about missing out on the '96 world crown and Nick Craigie talks about the brave - but ultimately doomed - CCM assault on the Dakar Rally.

To trawl through more back issues of DBR simply scan your smartphone over the QR code opposite or hook your PC up to www.dirtbikerider.com and click on the Digital Vault button – new issues are constantly being added so keep checking back...





THE REVEREND

FOREST GIMP!

WITH THE MX SEASON OVER OUR SUPER-FAST SUFFOLKER HAS BEEN HANGING IT OUT BETWEEN THE TREES IN SOME RED HOT ENDURO ACTION...

ell it's been a decent month since I last wrote. I was trying to get ready for RideoffroadUK's Ironman extreme enduro - I knew it was going to be really hard and alien to me and I was more than right. I drove up there in the camper with a friend called Chuggs who's done many enduros and his girlfriend Becky. It felt like it took us about 19 hours to get up there to start with (only five actually) and we walked some of it in the dark just to put my mind at rest a bit before hitting the sack. When we got up we walked the rest which took us about two hours - not like your usual MX track walk.

The qualifying race was so much fun - it was more of a hare n' hounds type thing with a few gnarly sections but nothing too bad. That was an hour-and-a-half and I finished seventh which I was pleased with. While I had some grub and chilled out a bit Chuggs had to try and clean the bike without using a washer as you were not allowed to and change the front disc as I had bent it right up. Then it was to the line for the Main Event of two hours with a lot more extreme stuff thrown in.

I got off in about sixth then tried doubling into these whoops they had made, over-jumped slightly and bottomed out into the third one on the ol' enduro suspension and it just sent me left into the bracken! Ha ha! I was gutted as I had a nice start but I doubt it would have changed much as there were two sections that were really difficult for me - one the foundations of an old building and the other a rock step where everyone had to be helped up bar about the top three.

It was trials on a motocrosser and I've never even ridden rocks on my trials bike, let alone a KTM! So I was in a right pickle basically but I think I managed six or seven laps and finished 10th so that was okay. Jamie Law did well in eighth and Neil Flockhart pulled a third out of the bag so fair play. I would just like to thanks KTM UK for lending me the bike for the event, Chuggs and Becky for their help with everything and thanks to the whole Rideoffroaduk crew for a good event - I hope I can come back next year and do better.

It was on a Saturday so we got back at 10pm and I had a quick shower then went out in town for a few beers with a couple of mates. I had a steady week then had a little ride on Thursday with Kiwi on his enduro track, then my good friend from the MTB world Rich Thomas came over and we had a bit of a shindig Friday night with all my mates round mine. Rich felt it the worst as we had to drive to the Dirt Bike Show the next day

and even on the way back we had to stop so that he could chuck up! The next day we had an Eastern Centre enduro in one of my local woods. So once we got back we got all our stuff ready and loaded into the van (thanks again KTM for the lights), then watched our local fireworks which get more and more boring the older I aet.

We were up early the following day and drove 10 minutes to the enduro. It's sandy round here and inside the woods it was like compost. I had a lot of fun and it proved to me how different enduro really is to MX as this was a real tight one in the woods and it was a totally new technique weaving in and out of the trees. I won it which was a bonus, then we stopped off at a pub and had a royal ol' roast as we were all finished by 1.30pm. After that I had a chilled out couple of weeks and rode a 65cc round my track which was so funny and I did a couple jumps too. Barry was riding his 250F and said he couldn't stop crying when trying to keep up with me! Ha ha!

The following weekend was the final round of the centre enduro champs in Thetford near where the Muntjac Enduro is. It was unreal - parts were like Lommel and the special test which was four-minutes long was soggy pants material. I was ragging the 250 smoker on the tests and having a blast. I won it again but my main goal was to come in on my minute which was so tight as Tom Sagar had set the pace last year and from the penultimate lap to the final lap was a five-minute drop in time allowance. I hung it out and made it with barely two seconds to spare so I was pumped with that along with winning the event and also happy for Kiwi as he won his eighth centre title. Blu's nan lives three miles from the enduro so we drove there and had a massive roast and I thought I was going to explode about 10 minutes after the dessert.

I had the Monday off after and have been training flat-out since and I'm really enjoying it - partly due to it not being too cold yet. Hope you guys enjoy the training feature me and Steve have done for the mag and pick up a few tips. We'll also be passing on some

training tips to Jacky Martens' son who's over for a week. We're three days in and he's struggling but I'm not letting up. I also lost my friend Rhys last week which was tough news. RIP Rhys. Xxx

Go Hard #45







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BLOOD SWEAT GERS

elcome once again, race fans, to Blood, Sweat and Gears! The festive season may well be upon us — traditionally a quieter time for the off-road crowd — but things have certainly remained pretty hectic from our end.

Earlier in the month we ran a stand at the International Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh. It was great to meet so many of you in person over the four days. We were lucky enough to be have some genuine retro BMX bikes on display which generated considerable interest as well as a healthy dose of misty-eyed nostalgia. It looks like many of you got your first taste of off-road thrills on these!

Also popular was our long-term test bike, the Suzuki 450, proudly dressed up in the Hooper Suzuki colours. You may have noticed it was sporting a pair of hand-cut Maxxis tyres. We were invited to watch these put through their paces as new team member, Luke Hawkins, put some hot laps in with his team-mate Lewis Gregory. I think this team will be one of the ones to beat next year. Both riders looked very impressive and the tyres performed magnificently.

We also spent time at the Motorcycle Live show at the Birmingham NEC, looking around and catching up with friends old and new. The freestyle motocross show this year was awesome, although I still found that the off-road section was a bit hidden away. But it was still good to see the major manufacturers stands all had at least a smattering of off-road machines. It was also encouraging to note that both off-road try-outs were fully booked by mid-morning so hopefully that's a few potential new bums on seats.

Hopefully by now you've noticed that the show is back on the air. On December 10 we head to Northern Ireland for supercross action – although please note that this is part of a look back at the last 12 months of off-road action in the UK and not the most recent Belfast event. The following Saturday – December 17 – we stay with the supercross, this time heading over to London's O2 Arena.

The Christmas Eve show has four times the fun as we join the British Quad Championships for their opening round at Silverstone as well as highlights from the GBXC opener from the Sweet Lamb Valley Centre. On New Year's Eve the grasstrack crowd provide the thrills with the opening round of the Worcestershire club's Buildbase Series. This will feature all the solo classes and those crazy 1,000cc sidecars. The January 7 show contains the final

The January 7 show contains the final supercross instalment from Liverpool and on January 14 we'll have more British Masters action from Whitby. Other highlights to look forward to in the New Year include our extreme trail riding voyage to Spain and highlights from the British Enduro Championship.

All that remains for me to do is wish you all a fantastic Christmas and a happy New Year.

Paul Minihane

BLOOD SWEAT & GEARS is currently on the Extreme Sports Channel (Sky 419/Virgin 527) every Saturday at 10.00am, 2.00pm, 8.00pm and midnight.



CROCKSTAR

G'DAY GORDO!

GC'S BACK AND PUTTING OFF PAINTING AFTER HOONING IT UP DOWN UNDER FOR MUCH OF MOVEMBER...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Sutty

ack in the UK' as Scooter used to say! Yeah, I don't need to remind any of you of the current climate for December. It's a disgrace! But I'm taking the opportunity to move forward in life – and stay indoors – by pushing through my list of workshop jobs that have stacked up over the racing season of 2011. The house is getting some fresh paint on the interior too as I had some plastering work completed recently. I hate painting. I will find any job to do before reaching for the rollers and brushes.

I'm done with riding a motocross bike for this month. My next race is on January 14 at Wembley in London. I've just had a period of six weeks supercross on the trot between Australia and the British series. A break will do no harm. Trials riding and a spot of Bog Hopping will always continue to happen over the December month but that is purely for fun and exercise. Last winter I trained right through with many hours spent doing foundation development by running for long durations with added weight by wearing a backpack with 15kg of sand in it. I haven't come to a point of realisation yet where I feel the desire to enter into that type of training again. Maybe I will just before I have nothing else left to do other than paint!

My trip to Australia was really good. I am in talks with the team I rode supercross for with the objective being that I return there to race their outdoor motocross national series. I hope it can be worked out so I have the option to do that. However, I am very motivated to put myself at the front of British races and repair all the damage that my 2011 results created. I will have to be patient and then take action when the time comes.

I was so happy with my performances in the Aussie SX races – I made every Main Event and improved each week. I learned so much and was sorry that I wasn't able to be there for longer to continue progressing. I would encourage any motocross rider to study and practice supercross. It without doubt will make you a better rider and advance your skills. Sure, it's dangerous and people smash themselves up doing it – just make sure you're not one of them.

Doing dangerous stuff is fun. I support that way of living. I ended up in a few scenarios during my trip to Oz where I found an overwhelming amount of adrenalin rushing through my bloodstream. Just about every day I

found myself faced with having to overcome fear in order to get to the fun part which makes you feel good. I rode a multitude of supercross tracks and each of them were full of mega sketchy sections where I had to man up in order to be on the pace. It's a case of having good judgement and handling fear getting in the way of your concentration. People who panic generally make bad choices. So don't panic and focus on what you're doing at the time instead of worrying about what might happen.

I also learned how to jet-ski. It's pretty hard if you're used to riding bikes but mighty craic once you get the hang of it. We did a lot of jet-skiing and we went on a few mountain bike training sessions at night in the bush. All the spiders come out at night and when you ride at the front of the group on the trail you get the job of clearing through the webs.

I was staying at my mate Josh's place who has a couple of Fireblade 1000s so, of course, we had a run out on those together. He's a world class superbike racer and he warned me before we went out that they don't get going until about 9,000rpm. He wasn't lying! They are crazy fast motorbikes and there should be a law against selling them to certain types of people.

We had another good go at scaring ourselves doing some cliff jumping/diving at a nearby waterhole. The climate there allows you to do so much more. Being in the water is a good way to get cooled down and there are heaps of ways to use the water to have a good time.

The highlight of the trip was riding into Sydney on Honda Monkey Bikes – three of us rode in on a Friday night. Richie runs a business restoring originals he gets from Japan. He fits 148cc big bore kits and goes from a three-speed up to a five-speed gearbox. Mine was doing 120kph in the fast lane of the freeway! We went around all the hotspots of Sydney – Bondi Beach, Kings Cross, Darling Harbour, Redfern, Opera House, Harbour Bridge, Casino etc etc – and it was without a doubt the coolest way to see around the city.

Being in Australia in
November and getting news
of a friend having prostate
cancer return I also
decided to join in and
support Movember.
Get well soon Harry.

Gordo



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN

RENTHAL APPAREL SOFTSHELL JACKET AND GILLET

ith 153 world championships and 132 US titles already under their belts Renthal are one of the winningest manufacturers in motocross.

To celebrate their all-round awesomeness and the launch of their new casual clothing range - Renthal Apparel - we've hooked up with the Bollington-born n' bred brand to offer one lucky reader a pair of pipin' hot winter warmers from their ever growing range of soft stuff. Shweet!

So basically what we're saying is that if you're a smart kinda boy or girl who knows their shiz when it comes to the motocross biz then you could be wearing a Renthal Softshell jacket or gillet that you've won for free in the very near future. That's pretty damn cool I think you'll find. And toasty warm at the same time!

The question we want you to answer is this - which Renthal-sponsored rider is the current MX1 British champion?

Is it: A: Brad Anderson

B: Brad Pitt

C: Brad Lackey

D: Bradley Pocock

If you know the answer then head online to www.dirtbikerider.com, log on and head to the competitions page then fill in the fields and hit transmit. The competition closes on January 12 and the winner - who'll be drawn at random from a precious pile of correctomundo answers - will win the Renthal jacket and gillet (that's a body warmer) provided The Bear ain't taken it into his hibernation station to keep warm while he naps through the winter.



RIDER (E

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WORDY

SWORDY'S NEW TEAM'S GOT A NEW SPONSOR AND THE SPEEDY SCOT CAN'T WAIT TO CRACK ON WITH HIS PRE-SEASON PREP...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutty

his month started off being stressful we were all packed ready to leave for Scotland to spend a few days with the family and I was also going up to do some promotion for the Glasgow Supercross. But after an hour of driving Starlia started screaming and had a high temperature so we diverted straight to the nearest A&E.

It was not good - she was taken straight in and went limp so they would not leave her. It makes you feel so helpless when your child is so ill. She had to have x-rays, antibiotics and be monitored until the following evening. The Worcester hospital was amazing and set up a room for Ayrton, Jodie, Starlia and me to sleep in. Ayrton thought it was such fun! We were allowed out the following night but we didn't make it to Scotland...

It was that time of year again when the Dirt Bike Show was on and I went up on the Thursday and Saturday for Suzuki and Fox. It was once again a good turn out and I enjoyed the days. I took Ayrton up on the Saturday and he is obsessed with bikes. There was a child's Suzuki and he wouldn't get off it. Fox have given me a load of kit for him for Christmas so he will be made up as he walks round the house with my helmet and gloves on.

The Belfast SX was the following weekend and I flew out and stayed with Adam Lyons. We had a ride on the Friday and I felt okay. Saturday was a long day of riding - only the first two qualified so it was a lot more intense but great for the spectators. In the MX2 I ended fourth which was better than last time but still not good enough for me. In MX1 I went down in the first corner as there was a pile-up so came home in ninth but I felt I rode well as I kept my speed and felt smooth. So overall bloody disappointed but looking forward to Wembley in January.

I had a golf day with my brother-in-law and some friends in London. It was a good day and I enjoyed it so much as I haven't played golf for a long time due to my shoulder and injuries.

I came second so compared to how I thought I would play I was happy. It was a great course - I just hate all the walking! I'll have to do it again soon as it does relax me when I'm training hard.

I went up to the NEC Show on the Saturday to reveal our new sponsor for 2012 - Tyco Suzuki by TAS. It is a good team we have for next year and they are eager to make everything run smoothly and want the bike to be perfect for me so 2012 is an exciting year. I must say I really like the bike and set-up so all's good. My new team-mate for next year is Stuart Edmonds riding MX2. He seems a nice guy - we got to chat at the NEC - so it was cool to meet him prior to the race day.

I have a new personal sponsor too – Austen Trading – who are helping me out with a van for 2012. Michael Austen has always been interested in MX but a mutual friend got us to talk and he's a cool guy and a man of his word. It's good when you get people that genuinely want you to do well and to help out so thanks!

I'm picking up the new Suzuki 450 today from Milton Keynes and want to get out riding for a few days before Christmas. Hopefully the weather will stay dry and not too cold so it becomes icy. I am also looking to do a few more training schools plus there's a presentation booked for December which I do enjoy doing as you get to meet the fans - I remember how important it was for me to get my trophy when I was a kid from a pro MX rider.

I can't believe it's December already hmmm, what a bloody expensive month. Not only do I have Christmas but it's also the missus' birthday. But it will be cool and I get to spend quality time with the family. We are off to Scotland this year so should be very chilled and relaxed with a nice open fire.

Wow, that's the life! Anyway. that's it for this month have a fantastic Christmas and a crazy New Year.

Braaaaaaaap



ELLIOTT BANKS-BOMBSHELL!

ithout doubt the biggest story to break at this year's International Dirt Bike Show is the news that Elliott Banks-Browne - who apparently was all set to stay put with DB Racing Honda for 2012 – has signed for Roger Magee's

HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK team.

We caught up with EBB and Roger at Stoneleigh but DB Racing's David Bright and Vicki Jeffreys who clearly felt they had safely secured Elliott's services – declined to comment, preferring to maintain what Vicki described in a later phonecall to DBR as a 'dignified silence'

The jump to KTM to fill the place vacated by Jake Nicholls guarantees Elliott a GP ride which was the deciding factor for the 2011 MX2 Red Bull Pro Nationals champ and Maxxis vice-champ.

"It's all last-minute and probably a big shock to everyone because I was supposed to be riding for DB Honda but I got given this opportunity last minute and it gives me an amazing opportunity to go race world championships," says EBB.

"It's something I couldn't not do. It's why I've been trying to do good in England, so I could race GPs.

"It's the opportunity of a lifetime and I have to go do it but I can't stress how much DB have helped me get to where I am now. Without everything Dave and Vicki have done for me I wouldn't be standing here now. Dave's obviously really upset at the minute and telling him was the hardest thing I've ever, ever, ever had to do in my life. It made me feel ill. The hardest phonecall I've ever had to make.

"I was pretty much set to go racing with DB. Some people are going to think I've been a bit of a dick to do that to them and in a way I think that as well but at the end of the day sometimes you've got well but at the end of the day softenines you've got to do what's good for you and I think it's the best opportunity that I could ever, ever have."

Team owner Roger Magee explains the reasoning behind his last-minute swoop for Elliott.

"We obviously had Kevin Strijbos signed from some weeks ago but we were on the look-out for a British-based MX2 rider but as we all know they're

in short supply at the moment. We had looked at a few continental riders but we thought that Elliott was the best to fit in with KTM and HM Plant and also to give a stepping stone to talent within the UK.

"He certainly stepped it up this year with his performances at both Maxxis level and in the Red Bull Pro Nationals where he became champion and we hope to take him up to the next level at GPs as we have with Shaun Simpson and Jake Nicholls.

"Hopefully things will be smoothed over – as far as I'm aware, although I don't have the full details, there wasn't ever a contract signed. It's important to get all the legal part sorted out and we've certainly done that with Elliott. I know he was gutted at having to leave Honda but that's racing and we have to move on."

To ensure a strong presence in the 250F class Honda switched their Buildbase-backed Frenchman Nicolas Aubin down to MX2. As DBR was winging its way to the printers DB Racing had yet to sign an MX2 rider to join James Cottrell.



Dirty Deeds!

inning hearts and minds! That's our mission statement when we set up camp for a nine-day run at Birmingham's NEC

for Motorcycle Live 2011. Since 2009 show organisers MCI Exhibitions have pushed to increase the off-road content and DBR, along with sister publication Trials and Motocross News, have been heavily

All the major manufacturers use the show to display their off-road range and the interactive elements of Motorcycle Live major on off-road. As well as the Ramp'd Up freestyle displays with riders including Chris Brock, Jamie Squibb and Dave Wiggins the Suzuki Off-Road Experience, Bumpy and Barry Johnson's Yamaha Off-Road School provide tuition for dirt virgins and all are fully booked throughout the full nine days

'It's been very busy for us and really good we're aiming to do 450 riders over the nine days and getting lots of young people onto dirt bikes, reckons Suzuki's Paul Cowshall. "We're sewing the seeds, showing them how much fun it can be and all the kids have a great time when they ride round there.'

The final Saturday of the show's dubbed 'Dirt Day' and among the MX stars attending is Stephen Sword who's there to help promote his new Tyco Suzuki by TAS team.

"It's been a few years since I've been here to be honest and it's good that they're pushing the off-road side of things a lot more than when I was last here. We should be here and road riders need to see what off-road's all about, how serious we are and how good it can be.

Despite running for two fewer days that in 2010 the show's a big success with visitor numbers totalling a whopping 112,197 – that's a 14 per cent increase on the previous year.

'It's been completely different to last year – I think the big difference is that people are having fun," explains MCI Exhibitions Managing Director Finlay McAllan. "The key for us this year was to make everything free so we weren't competing with the retailers and we told all our exhibitors 'look, 2009 didn't go the way we wanted it to, 2010 was our first step to putting it right, 2011 is the time to really kick back and enjoy nine days of Motorcycle Live and that's what they've been doing.

"I think we've still got some work to do [with off-road] but the fact that all our interaction is off-road based says a lot."



X POWER

MSTAR!

MAX GETS HIS OWN OPENING SHOW VIDEO IN HOLLAND BEFORE HEADING BACK TO CALIFORNIA TO PREPARE FOR SUPERCROSS

Words by Max Anstie Photo by Sutty

nother month has gone by and this time we had a quick trip over to Holland where I raced my sweet new CRF450 Gariboldi Racing Honda for a bit of fun and also did some sweet K-Dub style N-dos in my opening show.

I had never had a video before for an opening show and being an actor for a day was pretty cool. Waking up, going running, finding my gear and bike then riding through the hotel and to the track was how the video went. We had a good time but I was sure glad to head back to CA where it's nice and sunny.

So my mechanic - Tattoos - came back over to the USA with me to get my bikes all set up for the West Coast SX races. I have a 250 and a 450 so I have been changing it up and riding the 250 on SX then going and riding the 450 on the MX stuff. I feel so good on the Hondas and can't believe how comfortable I am already. Factory Honda Japan, Martin Honda and Giacomo Gariboldi are building me a machine to win the AMA SX title and the world championship as we speak. I love working with these guys - the Italians are so cool! Plus the food is the best!

Tattoo has been helping me out with chatting up the American birds - all the girls in America

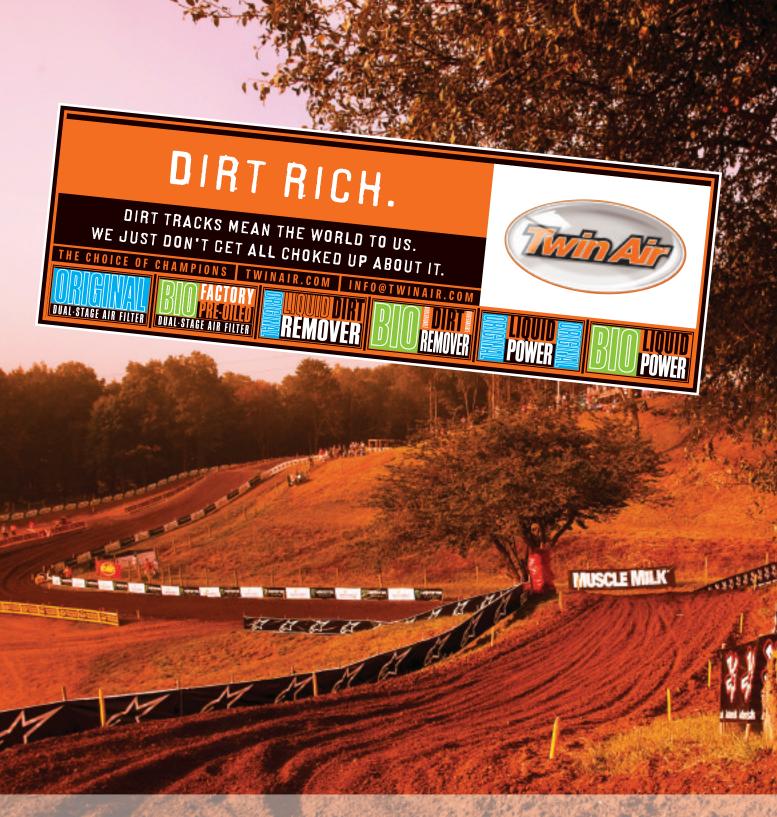
love me because I ride dirtbikes. However, I have got to train so I guess I will just stick to hanging out with our three lovely dogs we have at home for now. Oh yeah, Tattoo found a super-small kitten - no idea where it came from because we have no neighbours and three dogs so I would have thought they would have sniffed it out. Maybe someone dumped it out on the road. It's super-cute and really cool and we've named it Chefigata which means super-fit in Italian.

It was Thanksgiving last Thursday so we got to eat loads of turkey and nice food. I had to say that because really we were eating Dev's food! Lol! The day after Thanksgiving is called Black Friday where things go in a massive sale at 4am. Unfortunately, all the 73inch TVs got taken by some lady who was pepper-spraying everyone and there were massive riots so we didn't get any Christmas presents.

Anyway, that's about it for this month. I head over to Italy in a few days to start testing for a little bit. Can't wait to hit up Milan! Have

a great Christmas

everybody.



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LPE KAWASAKI'S NEW SIGNING MARTIN BARR SPILLS THE BEANS ON FIGHTING WITH BRAD, COSYING UP TO GORDY AND BEING BEATEN BY ZACH...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Sutty

Q: Having ridden both the KTM 450 and 350 which would you pick to ride for a full British championship season?

Seth Tranter, Lowestoft

A: "I didn't actually ride the 450 KTM as I was contracted to ride the 350 but now that I have been riding the 450 Kawasaki I would choose to ride the 450 all day long! Though the 350 was a very good bike I think with the extra capacity it will help me.'

Q: You won the Red Bull MX2 championship last year and then finished second in MX1 this season - did you surprise yourself at how well you've done in that series?

Brendan Mockeridge, Craigavon

A: "Hmmmm, it didn't really surprise me as that's where I train and practice to be. I want to win so I work hard to put myself in that position. I'd love to be able to say that I won both championships and be the first to do it!'

Q: Do you live in Northern Ireland or have you moved to England to reduce the travelling?

Craig Sewell, Brackley

A: "Since I was 17 I have always based myself in England to try and cut out the travelling cost but for 2012 I am going to spend more time at home so I can be around my family and friends. I think that will help me mentally as when I was in England I spent a lot of time on my own and was thinking too much and had nothing to take my mind off things...

Q: I think this is your fifth team in five years - it must feel like starting out again each season. Do you not feel that a longer stay at a team would be beneficial or is it a case of not being offered two-year deals?

Dan Bright, Exeter

A: "I was with UTAG Yamaha for six years and seemed to get stuck in a rut the last couple of years there. At this present time no-one really offers two-year deals apart from GP teams. I don't think you benefit a great deal as bikes and team sponsors are always changing but at the end of the day it all comes down to your results and all team managers want winners!

Q: You went into the British GP on the back of some great results - what happened there?

James Pike, Castle Cary

A: "The British GP didn't go to plan whatsoever and I was very disappointed with that! With the track being very fast and the start straight ripped very deep I was struggling to get the starts against the 450s, then it is so hard to come through the pack as everyone there

is fast. In the second race I landed short on one of the jumps then bounced into the braking bumps spraining my wrist.

Q: With Brad Anderson off to Australia are you thinking that 2012 could be the year of the domestic double for you?

Keith Flemming, Fife

A: "It's a pity to see Brad going as it would have made things more interesting for 2012 but I wish him all the best out there. There are a lot of other riders that are going to be winning races so it's not going to be easy but that is mine and Kawasaki's goals and I'll be giving it 110 per cent every weekend."

Q: Are you looking forward to getting back on a Japanese bike and do you think you'll go better on it?

Martin James, Kempston

A: "Yeah, LPE Kawasaki have put me a very good deal together and as soon as I tested the bike I knew straight away that it was capable of winning from stock. Me and the team both know that with a good winter's testing we will be in the hunt for winning races and championships.

Q: Zach Osborne, Brad Anderson, Gordon Crockard you've gotta fight one, be team-mates with one and get beat by a point in a championship by one. Go!

Gordon Crockard, Northern Ireland

A: "I'd fight Ando, get beat by one point by Zach and be team-mates with you!"

Q: How long are you going to be happy contesting the national championships – you must be desperate to get a shot at a full season of GPs?

Billy Gillard, Northfleet

A: "It's hard to get on a team that does a full season of GPs and pays you. It's my job and you can only race for so long at top level and I need to look after myself there's too many kids out there with rich parents who are paying crazy money to go do GPs and it hurts riders like me! Racing in the UK I can make money but if I did get the chance of a full season at GPs I'd iump at it!

Q: Do you prefer the mixed MX1/MX2 format of the RBPNs over the traditional individual classes?

Ryan Hendrick, Portsmouth

A: "I don't mind it - the MX2 guys are just as fast as the MX1 riders so it makes very good racing and makes it a bit more interesting.

Q: How much of a buzz do you get from getting to ride the des Nations each year?

Andy Bullock, Rhayader

A: "Racing at the Motocross des Nations is the biggest buzz ever! It's the biggest race of the year and to be part of it since 2005, it's brilliant! The atmosphere each year is electric and hopefully I'll be picked for many vears to come...

Q: The British MX1 class is pretty stacked next year with the likes of Whatley, Sword, De Reuver, Strijbos and yourself - discuss...

Jeff Pickering, Newton Abbot

A: "The British MX1 class for next year is going to be one of the best line-ups in the last few years - there are going to be about eight people that can win races. I'm well up for it and can't wait for the gates to drop, it will be a very good year to win it with all those top names in it!'

Q: Is there any one area in your riding that you think lets you down and needs improving?

Paul Walker, Magherafelt

A: "I think I need to improve on my hardpack riding as I prefer sand but the last two years I have been working hard on it and it's got a lot better as I took my first overall British win at Foxhill! A rider is always looking out for new things and watching other riders so we are always improving in all areas..

Q: What does a typical off-season week involve for you?

Sam Belben, Shepshed

A: "A typical off-season week isn't too different from a week during the racing season as I'm still out riding two or three times a week, in the gym at nights and out trials riding. I just don't do as much travelling around but I'm still busy but it's the best way to be! I try to treat it like a nine to five job so in the evening I can do what I want and chill out."

Q: Whatabootyee! Nez Parker, Leyland A: "Ha ha, wataboutyee!"

KRISTIAN WHATLEY BRITAIN'S OWN K-DUB

Next month we've got the enigmatic Kristian Whatley lined up to answer your questions at t'other end of dbrproprobe@googlemail.com



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CHRISTOPHE CHARLIER AND HARRI KULLAS SPILLING THE BEANS...

Interview and photo by JP O'Connell

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

CC: "Brad Pitt!"

HK: "That's a tough one - I think it would have to be some kind of superhero to play me!"

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter? CC: "Oh I am not sure - a long time ago!" HK: "That was two to three years ago but I did about 20 of them."

DBR: What was the last lie that you told and who was it to?

CC: "I try not to lie at all if I can help it."

HK: "Oh that's a long time ago, I'm a nice guy so I don't lie so much!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances? CC: "Yes, I think so."

HK: "I'd have a go – maybe not 100 per cent but I'd certainly have a go."

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't? CC: "I pretty much eat what I want except for the race weekends when I don't eat red meats and will stick with pasta.

HK: "I have to be very careful with what I eat as I have quite a few allergies like nuts for example.

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel - do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

CC: "I would make a hard pass but not clean them out." HK: "Yeah, if I have a chance then I will pass him

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas? CC: "No, just boxers. HK: "Nope!"

DBR: What is the highlight of your career so far? CC: "Winning the European championships.

HK: "The holeshots that I had at the Lierop and Loket GPs. The goal is to get some good holeshots in the future and stay out front, it feels so good for that one moment so I want to stay there!"

DBR: What car do you drive?

CC: "A BMW X5."

HK: "I don't actually own a car but my family has

a small van, a car and a camper that I have the use of when I want.'

DBR: And if money were no object? CC: "I'd have a Bugatti Veyron!"

HK: "I don't like some of the big expensive cars, maybe an Audi A5 or A8.

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

CC: "I don't think so."

HK: "No but if it's wrong then I'll say it's wrong."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

CC: "I am a bit big for the bike so maybe to be a bit shorter.

HK: "I think I look good! Also I am happy with my life, there are some people with no food or money whereas I have things pretty good.

DBR: If you could meet any person - alive or dead who would it be?

CC: "Ricky Carmichael I think."

HK: "Charlie Sheen - before he went crazy!"

DBR: If you could have any super power for a week what would it be?

CC: "To have the physical capabilities of Superman!" HK: "To be the fastest guy out there, faster than the Americans, all the Europeans!"

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

CC: "My bike, a track and my girlfriend."

HK: "Fuel, a bike and a girl.

DBR: What's your most prized material possession? CC: "Definitely my bike.

HK: "Some gifts that I have been given by friends. Not worth much money but they have sentimental value.

DBR: Favourite race you've ever been in?

CC: "The first race of the '09 European championships in England.

HK: "Probably my EMX2 victory in Schwedt in '09."

DBR: Be honest, how often do you Google yourself? **CC:** "Yeah I will have a look for pictures and stuff!" **HK:** "I have done it once or twice, yes!"

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

CC: "Brunette."

HK: "For me they are both the same, although in the past it has mostly been brunettes.

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

CC: "Oh god – I don't know!"

HK: "Sex is good but winning doesn't happen so often so I'd have to say yes.

DBR: One thing about your riding style that you'd like to improve?

CC: "I would like to improve my jumping."

HK: "I think my style is okay but I think I need to be a little more aggressive.'

DBR: What's your favourite film?

CC: "2012."

HK: "I knew this question would come up one day in my life but I don't remember what answer I came up with! I think it was Step Up 3, that was a really good movie.'

DBR: What is your most annoying habit?

CC: "My girlfriend would say that when I don't ride so good I am in a terrible mood

HK: "Probably that I don't show enough affection to people."

DBR: What's the worst motocross-related decision you've made during your career?

CC: "I had an offer to come to this team a season earlier but chose to go with somebody else, that was a mistake.

HK: "Nothing really stands out as being that bad -I tend to make plans and if they go wrong I just make another.'

DBR: If you had to permanently give up either the internet, mobile phone or TV which would it be? CC: "My phone.

HK: "TV

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

CC: "Having won the Italian championships I have a big fan base there."

HK: "People seem to think that I'm a shy guy but actually I'm not. I'm a pretty funny guy I think, I'm happy and open and if someone wants to come and say 'hi' then I'll stop for a chat."



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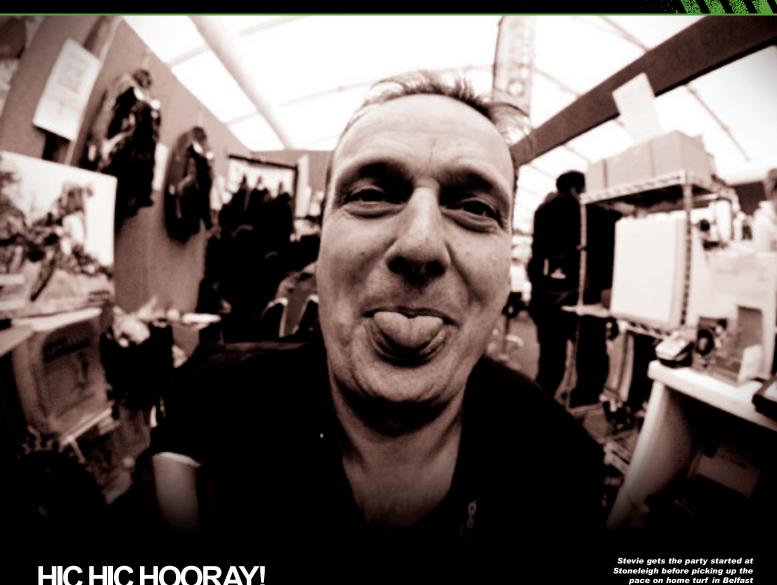


CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FROM THE GHOSTBIKES TEAM





BLARNEY



HIC HIC HOORAY!

SLE'S FEELING A LITTLE LIVERISH AND BELFAST SX – AND THE PARTY

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Sutty

t was close to a full house for the Future West Supercross in Belfast's Odyssey Arena and the audience were served a mammoth portion of thrills n' spills with a twist of seasonal panto antics thrown in for good measure!

Martin Barr was exceptional during the afternoon practice and was for sure the most creative rider on the tight and somewhat uneventful circuit. Marty looked great on his debut outing aboard his LPE Kawasaki, changing lines every lap on the only rhythm section of the track that could potentially make a difference to the race result.

Yep, the Irish challenge was evident with Barr and GC in attendance although the lead charge came from Ulster-born South African Neville Bradshaw who claimed the second step of the podium in both Pro Lites and Pro Open divisions.

Team Buildbase Honda continued their successful start with French import Nicolas Aubin. Dave Thorpe's star signing for 2012 made good on both his heats before sweeping the Lites final. He led the points-payer from the start to win from Bradshaw with a blanket covering Marty and the Relentless by TAS Suzuki of the Flying Scotsman Stephen Sword.

In the Pro Open it was Bad Brad from panto who had a point to prove. In what could quite possibly be his last ride for the PAR Homes

Honda team, after clashing with Stuart Edmonds It was not an easy route to the 2011 crown either in the head-to-heads, a fired-up Ando made the Main Event his own to win from Nev, Tom Church, Gordy and that man Aubin.

Four-wheeled action returned to the Odyssey in fine style and the fact that our very own ex-British quad champion Justwin Reid graced the runner-up step on the podium added that extra spice to the races for the sheep chasing brigade! While it was pretty much an injury-free event our speedy recovery wishes go out to Andy Owens who tested both the skills of the Odyssey medical team and the staff of the Royal Victoria Hospital. Get well soon mate!

Stuey Edmonds has enjoyed two eventful SX events under the Rob Hooper Maxxis/Apico banner and his experience of riding the Suzuki RMZ250 has been an all-round positive one. Not long after the Belfast SX Stuey confirmed his new partnership with the TAS Suzuki team for 2012 which will see the Dubliner ride all the UK domestic series in MX2.

The MRA prize-giving proved successful at the Wellington Hotel in Belfast with trophies in abundance, quality food, a few drinks and a hefty helping of post-season banter on the menu. Congratulations go out to all the champions.

Richard Bird overcame an injury-ruined 2010 season to win his first Ulster MX1 Championship.

for the WATT Motorcycles/Body Tech racer as early season machine problems coupled with an on-fire Wayne Garrett looked to have knocked his title aspirations into touch. Not one to settle, Richard kept fighting for every point in every moto and when Garrett picked up a seasonending injury he was ideally poised to swoop.

Watt Kawasaki-mounted Thomas Merton won

the battle for the MX2 championship having been engulfed in an almost season-long battle with Wayne Garrett for the quarter-litre title. Now officially the elder statesman around the Irish MX paddock, Tommy's 2011 season yet again highlighted that just like a good red wine he continues to get better with age!

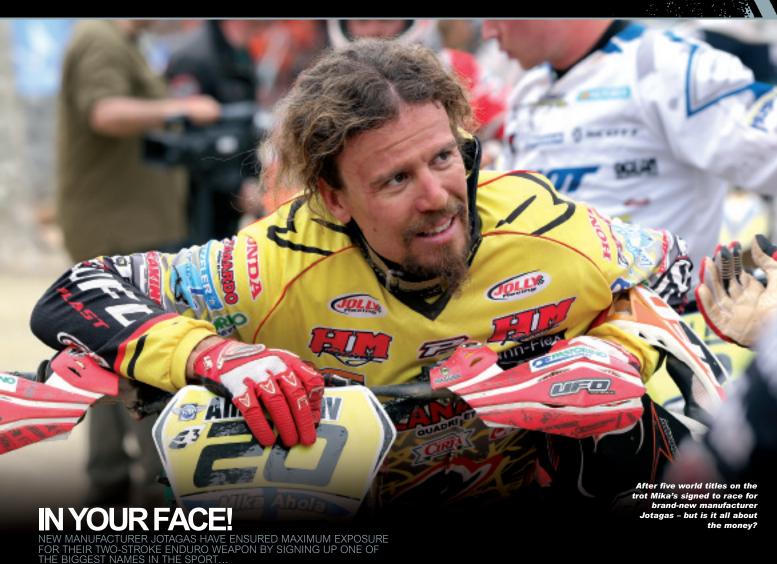
Surviving the Dirt Bike Show was one thing the Belfast Supercross aged me by no less than five years thanks to Jedward (aka Sam and Michael Beattie). Relentless and Red Bull should never, ever be mixed - it was certainly nothing to do with the vodka!

Right now we are bang in the middle of party season - good as it is it's not at all clever - so let me just take a moment to wish you all the best you can be in 2012 from all at Blarney and DBR and may the New Year be as good to you as you will be to others...





JONTY'S BOX



Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

etting noticed is something that's of huge importance for all manufacturers providing it's for the right reasons of course. Keeping a brand or product within sight of the consumer is essential for success but getting noticed isn't something that's easy to do. Millions can be spent on deciding the best ways to launch a new product with marketing analysts and specialists coming up with ever unique ways to make us aware of brands and products.

When it comes to the motorcycling business it's generally a little simpler. To make real noise you just need to get the chequebook out and sign a big star to compete on – or in – your products. It's what KTM did recently with Ryan Dungey, it's what Answer clothing did with James Stewart a year or two back and it's what new kids on the block Jotagas have just done in securing the services of five-time Enduro World Champion Mika Ahola.

To be fair to Jotagas, in proving themselves as more than just dreamers by actually designing, building (and proving that the bike runs) and then presenting their new 2012 trials machine at the EICMA show in Italy they'd started to generate quite a buzz about themselves. Stepping forward with seemingly very real intent the Spanish marque's plans with regards to their trials activities were clear. But not, until recently, their enduro aspirations.

So what do we know about Jotagas? Well, not that much really. They've seemingly appeared from nowhere yet with rumoured serious government backing have quickly moved from the design and development stage towards competition-ready machinery.

With trials and enduro lines - and being Spanish - it's hard not to comment on the similarities with Gas Gas. And just like Spain's most well-known off-road motorcycle brand who signed Ivan Cervantes to head their enduro racing activities, Jotagas have also stepped forward and enlisted the services of another top-line enduro great.

Whenever any top rider signs to ride a new bike or machinery thought to be uncompetitive like when DK signed for BMW or in motocross when Josh Coppins signed for Aprilia - it doesn't take long for people to start asking 'why?' and 'how much?'. And as a five-time consecutive Enduro World Champion at the height of his career, why Mika would want to move from the security of his former Honda deal to the unknown with Jotagas is something many are asking.

Mika's kept extremely tight-lipped about his move, saying nothing officially. Partly, I'm guessing, out of respect for his long-time former sponsor the Zanardo HM Honda team and partly because he's under contract until the end of the year. But also because he's probably aware that when he does step forward in his new team shirt a barrage of 'is it all about the money? questions will likely come his way.

I completely get why Mika has opted to perform such a huge career change. He's proved himself time and time again in recent seasons in all senior classes of the EWC and rightfully

commands and receives a healthy salary. But Mika isn't interested in simply winning title after title. What racing for a new team, even one that's completely unproven like Jotagas, offers is the chance to step away from the pressure of expectancy - not that that bothered Mika - and start again with new goals and objectives.

Mika's a smart guy and he'll have done his homework on this one. He knows Miki Arpa, the Jotagas enduro team manager, well – they were team-mates at VOR back in the day – and will have checked that their plans for the coming years are as water-tight as they can be. He'll know that winning won't come easy and that, if you'll excuse the pun, the road ahead won't always be a smooth one. But it's what he wants to do and it'll make the 2012 EWC series all the

Jotagas are the ones that potentially could end up being the big losers, although I don't think things will end up that way. With respect to Jotagas and the many European enduro manufacturers that produce 300cc two-strokes, mid-sized oil-burners aren't the hardest bikes to design and build. So they should get things at least somewhere near right straight away. I'd expect Jotagas' first enduro offerings to be not too far from the mark at which they need to arrive. But for any new-to-enduro manufacturer let alone a start-up company - to sign the biggest of the big, well, it's a risky strategy. Let us not forget how the David Knight/BMW union or the Jeremy McGrath to KTM deal ended up...





o win any sporting title once is pretty special, his award at the International Dirt Bike Show. to retain it even more, er, specialer. So to claim a hat-trick of titles - on the bounce has got to be just about as good as it gets. Step forward Jake Nicholls who's nailed three-in-a-row in the DBR annual awards!

But even Jake's been out-done by Manxman David Knight who's made it four on the trot in 2011 an achievement that surely must rank right up there alongside the MBE he's just been awarded.

All the awards are voted for by DBR readers and dirtZone members - that's you lot - so they are a 100 per cent reflection of what floats the off-road public's boat. Obviously, this counts for a lot more than if it was just me, Sutty and The Bear sitting down the boozer deciding on who's been nicest to us over the last 12 months.

For The Reverend his triple comes in the British Off-Road Personality of the Year category and the new JM Nestaan KTM rider, who'll be racing the Dutch national series in 2012, is delighted to accept

"It's awesome – that's got to be three in a row – I'm well-pumped," reckons Jake whose massive mutton chops and buck wild 'tache give him that full-factory combine harvester racer look last seen on the jug player in the Wurzels. "It must be the old squit I write in my column. I really appreciate it all and hopefully I can get another one next year without

riding in the British championship."
For the record, Jake scoops a massive 49 per cent of the vote to win by a mile from Maxxis, Masters and Red Bull Pro Nationals champion Brad Anderson and ginga ninja Max Anstie.

Knighter's quality quadruple comes in the British Off-Road Racer classification where he grabs 45 per cent of the vote, despite spending much of the season recovering from a double hip op. And it's a close-run thing for second with Jonny Walker, who burst onto the scene in 2011 with awesome rides at Erzberg and in the ISDE, just getting the nod over trials star turned extreme god Graham Jarvis.













"Thanks to everyone that voted for me," says the man of the moment, "especially after a quiet year, makes me happy to win DBR's best off-road rider for the fourth consecutive year. I've had a few good results but not enough to make me happy so cheers everyone."

Jake nearly doubles up in the British

Motocross Racer category but his 29 per cent share of the vote isn't enough to beat Tommy Searle who wins with a 31 per cent slice of votes cast.

"I'm really pumped with that," says Tommy who won in '08 and was second behind Jake in '09. "I try my best all year so it's good to get a little something back and know that the readers of DBR appreciate what I do and that they like me as a rider. It's always a big thing - you have to be liked in any sport and I'm happy that they

Third goes to Brad Anderson after his stellar domestic season with AMA 250 champ and 2010

winner Dean Wilson earning an honourable mention in fourth.

The International Motocross Racer section sees KTM's MX1 and MX2 world champions fill the top two places with Ken Roczen dethroning 2010 champ Trey Canard to get the nod over Antonio Cairoli who won the award in '09. After his heroics indoors and out in America in 2011, Aussie ace Chad Reed picks up 12 per cent of the vote for third.

Coming as some consolation - or maybe not! Speedy Reedy does scoop the award for Crasher of the Year, an accolade won last year by Christophe Pourcel. Chad's spectacular crash at Millville helped him to a massive 49 per cent of the vote to bring it home ahead of 2008 and '09 winner Billy Mac and US star James Stewart.

One of the keenest fought categories is British Youth Motocross Racer with previous winners of the calibre of Max Anstie, Josh Waterman and Conrad Mewse. Conrad's in the mix for 2011 but comes home fourth after James Dunn nicks it from Ben Watson and Ryan Houghton in the closest result this time around

with just four per cent separating the top three.

'It's real cool," says Dunny when we hand over his framed cover at Stoneleigh Park. "It's sweet to be recognised by the readers of the best magazine in motocross.

The award for your International Off-Road Racer goes to extreme specialist Taddy Blazusiak who finally nails the win after finishing second in '09 and third in 2010. He gets almost 44 per cent of the vote to win from EWC legends Mika Ahola and '08 winner Juha Salminen.

Our final category is for Best FMX Rider and

Robbie Maddison lifts the crown for the third time in four years from Nate Adams and Andre Villa. Maddo gets nearly a third of all votes cast to claim the big prize.



ENDURO ILLUSTRATED 2011

PHOTO ANNUAL

The fourth edition of Enduro Illustrated might just be the best yet as renowned enduro junglist Jonty Edmunds pulls out all the stops to give readers a true behind-the-scenes look at the eight-round EWC. Packed with amazing photography, interviews and insight this is one bookzine you're gonna want to keep forever. It's available by mail order only which means it's not gonna be in the shops soon so sort yersen out online – it wouldn't be the first time *wink*.

Price: 12 euro including P+P Supplier: enduro-illustrated.com Contact: 07779 091014

FOX RACING 2012 ENTERPRIZE RACEWEAR

This is the reet same kit that barmy Brad Anderson won the 2011 MX1 British Championship in and if it's good enough for him it's got to be good enough for all us guys who aren't on it like a car bonnet. Seriously though, it's definitely top quality stuff that's built to last and it looks reet fast. Are we sure? Yeah, we're Geordie Shore.

Price: Jersey £45 Pants £145 Gloves £22 Supplier: foxeurope.com Contact: 0191 487 6100

UNIT

CASUAL CLOTHING

Unit originates from the east coast of Australia where two brothers hustled their way up and down the Gold Coast, selling a handful of different tees from the boot of their car. The edgy and fresh designs were an instant hit and within a few months some of the best pros in the moto and BMX industries were supporting the Unit movement. And you can do the same, just get online to www.freestylextreme.com and shop, shop, shop until your koala drops!

Price: see website Supplier: freestylextreme.com Contact: 0117 304 9561

ASTERISK

ULTRACELL KNEE PROTECTION SYSTEM

Madison's Stuart Flanagan-man – the youngest looking 28-year-old I've ever met – tells me that Asterisk's UltraCell knee protection system is without doubt the most technologically advanced knee protection system around. What does that mean in layman's terms? These knee braces is sick innit! For more information than I could ever give you here log on to www.asterisk.com then go see your local Madison-stocked dealer – shweeet!

Price: £599.99 Supplier: madison.co.uk Contact: 0870 034 7226





AB RACE CRUISERS

RACE VANS

If you're looking for some sweet new wheels to get you and your clan to the races in style then check out the latest collection of cruisers from AB Race Cruisers. The ABRC boys are able to supply fully fitted out vehicles like this 22K Mercedes or carry out a top-notch conversion on your own panel van. There's something sweet in all price brackets so give 'em a call to see how they can help get you on the road in a stylish but affordable race cruiser of your own

Price: call for details and tell 'em DBR sent ya!

Supplier: abracecruisers.co.uk Contact: 07747 467131/07540 518420

RISK RACING

SFAL DOCTOR

A clever little tool that helps clear the crud from your fork seals, this Risk Racing Seal Doctor could potentially help save you a fortune in suspension work and stuff. Sweet!

Price: £15.99

Supplier: riskracingeurope.com Contact: 02892 699770



ALLSPORT DYNAMICS

As worn by Bam Bam Barcia and Wang Wang Wacker these Allsport Dynamics wrist braces will keep you riding if you've got poorly sick wrists that hurt like heck when you get down and dirty. So instead of selling off that four grand race machine because yo' wrists are shizzled think about investing 300 bones in an OTS wrist brace instead. You knows it makes sense - pow pow! They also work to prevent wrist injury too, just in case you were wondering.

Price: various

Supplier: decade-europe.com Contact: 01792 469811

EKS BRAND

GOX SCATTER GOGGLES

With a whole heap of new designs and colours instore for 2012 Eks Brand's range of MX goggles just keeps on growing in size and style. Definitely some of the best performing and coolest looking goggles around, these all-new Scatters certainly follow that trend with their lightweight frame, anti-scratch and anti-fog iridium style lens and 17mm thick four-layer face foam. Tasty looking, smart and comfy too they're like the Dawn Porter of the goggle world. Nice.

Price: £39.95

Supplier: illumindistribution.co.uk Contact: 07746 112092



WISECO

CAMSHAFTS

World renowned piston manufacturer Wiseco has, over the last half-a-decade or so, been experimenting with different designs for dirt bike camshafts and has now released a range of camshafts to suit nearly any ability of rider from pootler to pro. These cams benefit from the usual exceptional Wiseco build quality with an added splash of Tabasco to sting your bike in the butt a little!

Price: £129 99 Supplier: madison.co.uk Contact: 0870 034 7226

LEATT

GPX CLUB 3 NECK BRACE

Now even better than its award-winning older brother, the GPX Club 3 is made from a new translucent material and features brand-new lightweight clip-on padding and even more adjustability plus the same old awesome alternative load path technology that lets the Leatt-Braces work so wonderfully

Price: £349.99 Supplier: apico.co.uk Contact: 01282 473190



GREAT SWAG UP FOR GRABS WITH DIRTZONE

Every month we're going to be trawling though the pages of our dirt bike-devoted social networking site dirtZone searching for med comment, intelligent insight, pretty pics and other stuff that just flat-out makes us laugh – and then handing out prizes to the dirtZone members who've posted it up. If you've got something to share then point your PC at www.dirtbikerider.com, sign up or log in to dirtZone and get posting! There's 5,000 loyalty points for every post we publish..

COMMENT OF THE MONTH

LOVE THE FACT THAT THEY LOOK LIKE PROPER TRACKS AND HAVING THE NATIONS ON THERE WILL BE COOL AS WELL BUT AS IT STANDS I WOULDN'T BUY THIS GAME. THE GRAPHICS ARE POOR, THE RIDERS ALL LOOK TOO SMALL AND WHAT'S WITH THE **CONSTANT SLIDING?"**

Leon Ward doesn't think much to Mud – that's the official videogame of the FIM Motocross World Championship that's due to hit stores in February. While Leon probably won't be getting anything nice through his letterbox from Youthstream or the game's producer Black Bean this Christmas he can expect some Etnies Faders and Muc-Off to fall upon his doormat in the next few weeks!



CHATTER OF THE MONTH

"SO AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE WEBSITE HAS POSTED THE RESULTS OF A POLL FOR THE TOP 100 MX RACERS OF ALL-TIME AND THE LIKES OF CAIROLI AND EVERTS AREN'T IN THERE. WHO WOULD YOU PUT IN THEIR TOP 100?"

JOSH HANSEN WANNABE JORDAN LILLEY OPENS A REAL CAN OF WORMS WITH THIS ONE THAT'S DISCUSSED TO DEATH BY CHRIS KING, CONNOR EVANS AND OLLIE HAYWARD AMONG OTHERS. HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT WHO SHOULD BE IN THE TOP 100 AT WWW.DIRTBIKERIDER.COM RIGHT NOW...



If your dirtZone post appears on this page you'll win a one-litre bottle of marvellous Muc-Off bike cleaner* unless you live outside Britain in which case we'll send you some of Muc-Off's brilliant brushes and wipes instead.. *One bottle per member per month

DEAN WILSON DAVE THORPE MONTH! what it'd be like to be a famous racer but 13-year-old **Sean Kevans** from Lockerbie wants to know 'if you could be any British rider of any time who would it be?' which is a question so cunning that it has to win our Poll of the Month prize! For posting Sean wins some Muc-Off, a Renthal Softshell jacket and 5,000 dirtZone loyalty points

PICTURE OF THE MONTH

Although Sutty would argue Carmen Sanchez deserves to win this one for her artistic self-portraits we've decided to award the prize – and points - for Picture of the Month to tenacious teen terror Tom Neave who likes to use his ex-James Noble CRF450 to mow the lawn on. Teenagers eh? Tom's **Uncle Tim** took the pic – terrific!

Ancing Bears

Bike Show and what a day out it was but I have to ask why had the dancing girls been replaced by two kids hopping about on bikes? They weren't even motorbikes. I still picked up a couple of bargains though so it wasn't a totally wasted day out and I got to meet my hero

Yeah, we have to agree that the boys on bikes weren't really hitting the spot although it was

something different from the normal girls in lycra which aren't motorbikes either. Maybe next year they'll have something that suits your tastes a little bit better? See you there...

POLL DANCER!

If I read another poll about which is best, a two-stroke or a four-stroke

We're actually with you on that one – I think we all decided years ago that four-strokes are better than two-strokes which, in turn, are better than four-strokes!

MEMBÉR OF THE MONTH

FMX fan Shauna Giblin's an aspiring action sports journalist and Essex-based student who originally hails from the Wes'side of Ireland. A lover of all things moto and also a fan of planking, apparently, Shauna's posted a plethora of pictures from events such as the X-Fighters and the Masters of Dirt. She also recently celebrated her 19th birthday so we're gonna give her a tardy present in the form of a pair of Pirelli tyres and 5,000 lovalty points!



TOMMY Searle

OTHER

WITH THE NEWS THAT THE MASTERS OF DIRT FMX SHOW IS HEADED TO THE UK AND IRELAND IN THE SPRING MUSCLE-BOUND BRYAN HOPKINS POSTED AN AWESOME CLIP FROM A SHOW THE FRUIT LOOP FREESTYLE TROOP PUT ON IN VIENNA IT'S QUITE LITERALLY A VIENNESE WHIRL. SPEAKING OF CONFECTIONARY DELIGHTS HAS ANYONE TRIED MR KIPLING'S FESTIVE BAKEWELLS YET? SARAH LICKMAN POSTED PICTURE OF SOME A WEE WHILE BACK AND WE WANNA KNOW IF THEY'RE AS TASTY AS THEY LOOK





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IANOITANS

Grizzieu veteral commentator Jack Burnicle grills grizzled veteran rideriteam manager Dave Thorpe and his new Buildbase Honda signing Nicolas Aubin on the DBR Live Stage

"IT'S GOOD FOR ME TO COME HERE. I THINK IN ENGLAND I AM ONLY KNOWN FOR MY RIDING, NOT AS A PERSON SO PEOPLE CAN COME TALK TO ME AND IT'S GOOD FOR ME TO HELP LEARN ENGLISH."

SOME OF THE BIGGEST NAMES IN OFF-ROAD RACING HELP DRAW RECORD CROWDS TO THE 2011

ew bikes, new attractions and a whole raft of star names from the past and present help make the 2011 International Dirt Bike Show a massive draw with more than 22,000 off-road fans passing through the doors of Stoneleigh Park at the start of November.

Among the innovations for 2011 is a forward-thinking pricing structure that means advance tickets for the traditionally 'quiet' opening day are available for just a deep sea diver. And it results in a big turn-out making 'Thrifty Thursday' a big success.

Star-spotters are spoilt for choice over all four days with some of the biggest names in the sport calling in including Marc de Reuver, Jeffrey Herlings, Tommy Searle, Nicolas Aubin, Jake Nicholls, Elliott Banks-Browne, Stephen Sword, Clement Desalle and Steve Ramon who all take their turn on the DBR Live Stage for an interview with legendary commentator Jack Burnicle.









STALKER MX CHRIS GOES BACK TO HIS ROOTS Road racing star Chris Walker's returned to his off-road roots with his purchase of the Gonerby Moor practice track in Lincolnship and he's at the show to publicise his new Steller MX venture

StalkerMX venture.

"The show's been fantastic – we've come here really just to put StalkerMX on the map and I can't believe the response," says Chris. "We've been doing these super saver passes and we've sold more in one day than I thought we'd do in the whole show. After all these days of just being a visitor to the show to be part of it is fantastic.

"Motocross has always been in my family and always been my passion but I was never that good at it and got the chance to go road racing and did better at that quicker than I ever did at motocross. But my first love and passion has always been the off-road side.



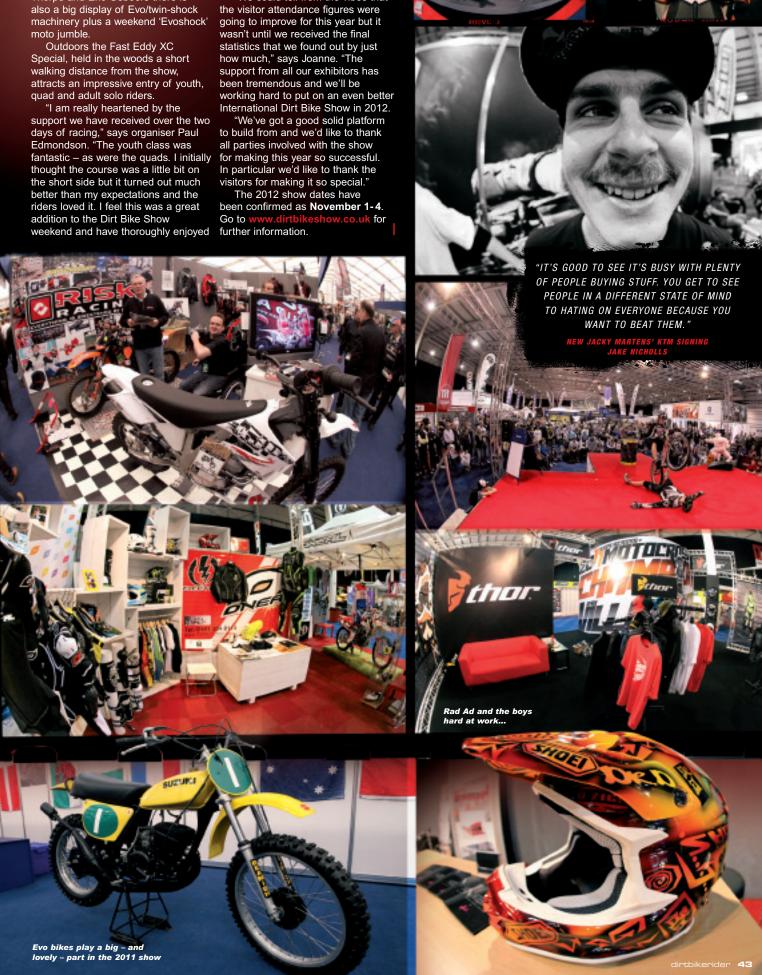


While the show is predominantly about new bikes and gear, for 2011 organisers have consciously taken a long, hard look back at the roots of the sport so as well as interviews with former world champs Dave Thorpe and Eric Geboers there is also a big display of Evo/twin-shock

it, as have the riders."

With attendance figures a whopping 28 per cent up on 2010, show organiser Joanne Watson is delighted with the most successful show for a number of years.

"We could tell from the vibes that





SWEAT-X

Everything you need, everything you want. The Smith Sweat-X Series gives you both: Feature-rich styles that encompass the best technology in the business along with progressive new graphics every season. Everything you want in a goggle, everything you need for a better day on the bike.











BOXING, RUNNING, CYCLING, SWIMMING — PLUS A KILLER CIRCUIT TRAINING PROGRAMME — ALL ENSURE THAT GP STAR JAKE NICHOLLS BUILDS THE BASE FITNESS NEEDED TO LAUNCH A WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CAMPAIGN FROM. HERE'S HOW HE GOES ABOUT IT...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira



nce upon a time motocross greats like six-time world champ Joel Robert would party late into the night, snatch a few hours sleep and then go out and win a GP on a primitive-handling twin-shock. And don't get Jack Burnicle started on some of the antics of legendary party animal Graham Noyce who in between living a rock n' roll lifestyle managed to lift the '79 world 500cc title. But those days are gone...

In much the same way as Robert's 250cc CZ or Noycey's 500cc Honda just wouldn't be competitive in today's sport, neither would their bodies. Just as the factory bikes rolling out of Mattighofen are super-evolved, state-of-the-art machines, the men who race them have been forced to become world class athletes as they hunt for the slightest advantage that will give them the edge at the end of a 40-minute GP moto.

Which explains why, with the 2012 season still a good few months away, the riders who are serious about winning have already kicked their training programmes into gear. But while we're struggling out of our pits to join the nine-to-five grind, what exactly is an off-season GP rider getting up to? The best way to find out is to go take a look for ourselves so we headed

down to Suffolk to spend a couple of days in the company of JM Nestaan KTM rider Jake Nicholls and his trainer Steve Potter.

With Steve's help Jake's built a reputation as being one of the fittest riders around but it's the result of three years of hard, hard graft with a huge emphasis placed on a solid training schedule throughout most of the off-season, the foundations of which are laid by a minimum of six weeks concentrating on base fitness.

"I've had six weeks off but even then I've been quite active, it's not like I was just sitting around," says Jake. "I've kept a good base fitness and was doing enduros every other weekend and riding once a week – although I was actually trying to be as unhealthy as possible and get it out of my system.

"From now until January it will just be physical training – no riding as such apart from a bit on my trials bike – to build a good foundation so that if I get ill in February or March for a week I can take that week off and not have to worry about it. If I didn't work on my fitness now I'm sure I could get ill, take a week off and still go into the first race feeling fit but it doesn't carry you through.



"Like Josh Coppins has always told me, do the right preparation in the winter and you can get away with doing bugger all in the week during the season. Obviously you don't – but if you've done six weeks to a couple of months beforehand and you get an injury or are ill it maximises the time you can take off to recover. Six weeks doesn't sound very much but it's incredibly intensive – five days a week pretty much absolutely flat-out."

When we visited Jake was in the early stages of his programme and just beginning to get up to speed but, even so, he was already putting his body through the sort of punishment that the average racer would class as intense.

"At the minute I'm running for about 40 minutes before breakfast just to help lean out a bit and then by the end of next week I'll push that up to an hour – you need to sort of build up to it. Another time I might get up on my running day and not feel like doing a real long run so I'll do 20 minutes and on the way back do a load of hill sprints."

To build the fitness levels needed to race GPs Jake has to be regimented with his training but at the same time he keeps things as flexible as possible with mountain biking, road cycling, BMX, swimming and even yoga all forming part of his programme.

"When I'm not trying to lean out I get up early, have some breakfast and wait for an hour or so for that to go down. Most of the time I'd go for a run for about an hour and 20 minutes which would be done at a pretty fast pace – my regular route's just under eight miles. It's not sprint stuff but it's not bad – sometimes I'll do it in an hour, sometimes I'll add bits and change it about and extend it to, say, two-and-a-half to three hours.

"Other mornings I'll get up at 6am and swim for an hour or something like that and then might get on the rowing machine late morning. I'm quite open with it all — it all goes on how I feel. That's the best thing that Josh ever told me which was listen to your body more than anything. So I go by that and if I wake up feeling a bit stiff I may just go for a swim but when all's good then I'll go for it and do a different activity every morning. And always in the afternoon I do circuits and boxing with Steve once he's finished his stuff."

Starting this month and over the next few issues we'll be sharing Steve's training plan with DBR readers. Following Jake's programme but tailored to the average weekend racer, Steve's pulled together a week-by-week programme to get you all fighting fit for the start of the 2012 season. Turn to pages 52 and 53 for your first month's schedule.

Even with Steve's eased programme a lot of readers will find it a hard slog to build base fitness although the rewards will be clear come your first race in spring. But for Jake the process is actually enjoyable.

"I'm lucky. I get to this time of year and I can't wait to do this, I'm very motivated. Probably the worst bit for me is the resting – it drives me mad sitting about if I've come back from a run at 11 in the morning and have to wait until three or four in the afternoon to train again. I'd much rather be out messing about doing something but then I'm not resting.

"Also when it gets really cold I don't really enjoy cycling. But I try not to do too much long stuff like that really because obviously we only race for 40 minutes but I still believe it's good for building base fitness. And then we do all the short intensity stuff so it's a good mixture.

The variation also helps keep it fresh.

"I don't really like gyms and I hate lifting weights which is a good thing really because I'm already a big lad for my class so I can't afford to be pumping lots of weights. At my size it would be quite easy to get a bit bigger without really realising. At the moment I'm a bit over





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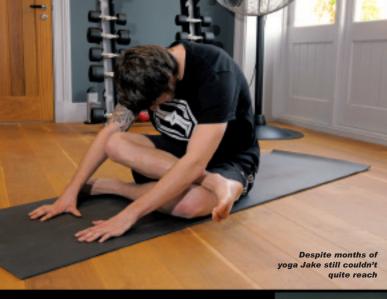
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FLEXIBLE FRIENDS STRETCHING - THE TRUTH!

Anyone who follows Tommy Searle and Elliott Banks-Browne on Twitter will know that the tweethearts ain't adverse to slipping into something more comfortable and hitting the mats for a yoga

session and Jake's also a fan...
"Yoga is about injury prevention. I'd imagine that
most motocrossers aren't that flexible because we're always in that one position so I really think yoga helps. It's hard work even though you're not puffing but you get that boiling hot feeling when you're holding a position. It's all about being the most well-rounded athlete you can be. It's about doing as much as possible that can help you. That's the bottom line."













my fighting weight and nearer 13 stone but that comes down real quick to around 12-and-a-half stone, 12-and-a-quarter stone at best but that's still heavy for a 250 so I have to be careful with that side of things."

In January when his base fitness is rebuilt Jake's flying out to New Zealand where he'll stay with Ben Townley and start putting in the hours in the saddle.

"These six to eight weeks beforehand really set you up. The circuits take the place of riding and if I was staying in England in January and couldn't get out on the bike then I'd keep doing the circuits for longer."

Once the season's under way, when Jake's not riding his fitness regime is geared more around maintenance. But between training, riding and racing he ensures he stays in

the kind of condition expected from a modern professional athlete.

"During the season I'll always get up and go for a run before breakfast. In Belgium I've got a good system where I run for 45 minutes before breakfast, have a little break, do some sit-ups and general exercises just to keep me in shape and go riding in the afternoon. The tracks are so rough and it's so intense being timed every lap that after riding I'm f*cked and can't do anything else. I'll come back and maybe do a real steady spin on my bicycle and that's me done for the day and that's me as fit as anyone.

"I'm one of those people who believes that if I work hard then I deserve a good result and it will come to me. It's just my mentality. I don't believe in myself unless I've done the work which really helps me with the training."

WEEK ONE

All workouts need to start with a five-minute warm-up - arm circles, armpit rolls, skipping, spot running, static bike etc. Make warm-ups a habit and create your own routine. For example, before Jake races he is boxing and jogging on the spot, getting warm blood flowing so he's sharp for the all-important gate drop.

We're starting with seven basic bodyweight exercises as I'm assuming we're taking a body that has done very little work. Think of it as running in that 2012 KTM ready for the new season.

For those of you out there who are already fit (or think you are!) bear with me as I guarantee I'll have you sweating like a worn out carthorse as we go on...

SIT-UP SLIDES ATS UAT THRUSTS

Aim to do each circuit two to three times and try to do each exercise for 15 seconds. Try to fit as many reps into these 15 seconds as you can aim for 10 to 12. Remember to have 10 seconds rest between exercises and a one-minute rest before beginning another circuit. You should follow

When you've finished be sure to warm down using the same methods used for warming up, although taking everything slow and easy.

After days one and three you should be feeling up to doing circuits with no rest in between exercises so get your head into it, warm up and have a crack. Don't overlook the rest days – these are as important as the training. And listen to your body – if you feel crap then rest. Some days can be treated as 'active' rest days where you do some light cycling or even just take the dog for a walk...

WEEK TWO

The set up for week two is the same as for week one but now add step-ups after each exercise. Step-ups are an easy exercise to do in your house – just use a step platform like stairs but make sure they are between eight and 14 inches high.

WEEK THREE

The same goes for week three but now let's add a short run in after each exercise - 10-15 metres should be fine or if you don't have the room maybe use a static bike. Basically it's all about working your lungs before and after the circuit exercises.

WEEK FOUR

Week four uses the same routine as week three but now we add another set of step-ups after each run or a 15-second static bike session. For example 12 reps of press-ups followed by a 10-15 metre run followed by 12 step-ups. This can all be done in one room if you use your head and improvise the limited equipment you need. By week four I would like to think you are

repeating the routine three times through and it wouldn't be a bad idea to time your sessions to get an idea of what you need to improve on.

Okay, so now you have a four-week programme based around Jake's routine. Training ain't rocket science and some of these exercises you will have all seen before but they get results which is all that matters. People think Jake is one of the fittest riders out there and I like to think that too but he isn't Superman – he just works harder than anybody else and digs deep when required.

















ith a new season ahead it's time to think about getting your mind and body ready for the job in hand. I've spent the last three years doing just that for Jake Nicholls, working with him during the week and accompanying him to races around the world learning exactly what's needed for these guys to function at the highest level.

And as well as Jake I've been lucky enough to work with Ben Townley and Josh Coppins and take a bit of what they know for my own. But let's leave the GP gods alone and get back to the club rider who wants to raise his game.

Over the next 12 weeks Jake and I are going to take you through a plan which is based on the regime we stick to but tailored for a 9-5 guy to fit in with his daily routine. Commitment, hard

work and bringing good food and sleep into your routine is all I ask of you and in return I promise you'll see and feel the difference.

Over the course of the next three issues we're going to cover warm-ups, base fitness, flexibility, strength and concentration, diet and sports nutrition supplements. But remember - there are no short cuts to any place worth going!





LIFESTYLE CHOICE

FOOD, DRINK AND REST

Most of us will eat whatever's going when we happen to be hungry but get yourself into the mindset of an athlete and think would a GP star have a fry-up for breakfast? Or would he have porridge? And for lunch would he have a Big Mac or a chicken pasta salad?

Many times Jake has been tucking into yoghurt and fruit for breakfast while I sit next to him shovelling down a massive trucker's fry-up but that's why he's got to where he is today. And in between meals if you're serious about training then snack on nuts and fruit - that half-price pie from the garage is not what you need.

Remember to always have plenty of water with you aim for at least two litres a day – as you've now started to up your body's workload so you have to give it the right fuel. You wouldn't run your 2012 KTM on fuel you found in a rusty can in your granddad's shed would you?

You'll have noticed that I've built four days of rest into the weekly schedule. Rest is a massive part of training so make sure you do. And just because it's not a training day doesn't mean you can party into the wee small hours. File that one alongside the 50p pies. You need to think like a champion and get into a champion's mindset.

THE NECK REP

After every session you do we have one final exercise that's a life saver - the neck rep. Lie flat on your back with you head hanging off a bench or something similar and make a nodding dog motion with your head. Start off with a minute and build up over the month to get up to three minutes with a helmet on. Trust me, this will pay massive dividends during a moto as the neck takes a hell of a pounding out there.









ere at DBR we like to test bikes and products to the best of our abilities.

Nothing beats time on a bike to work out its pros and cons and if I was going to make a dirtbike I would want it tested to the max. And what better place to test enduro machines than the Enduro World Championship?

Well Husqvarna took their new breed of bikes to the 2011 world championship series and quite frankly kicked a whole lotta ass. World enduro calls for huge levels of reliability and speed – plus bucketfuls of passion – and it seems this new wave of Husqvarna power has put the Italian/German brand into the driving seat as far as EWC racing is concerned with a pair of world titles being delivered by Juha Salminen and Antonio Meo.

The superb Enduroland facility was made available for the UK launch of the Husqvarna 2012 range of enduro machinery and the weather was kind. The test range consisted of the WR125, TE250, TE310 and the TE449 and with the 250 and 310 carrying Salminen and Meo to world crowns I was even more eager than ever to crack right on.

The changes to the new bikes include a very positive move to Kayaba suspension. Husqvarna have kept things a little too Euro in the suspension department for a while so this move is great as it brings the bikes into line for easier service and set-up with aftermarket springs and parts. Another positive change is an

improved frame design across the range for greater torsional rigidity and strength.

Let's start with the little 'un and the WR125 is a bundle of fun and an absolute blast to ride. There is no denying I am a little over-sized for any 125cc machine but it doesn't stop me having great fun on 'em! The Husky pulled strong from the bottom then hit a slight lean spot in the carburation. This kind of thing is part of the fun with a 125. The jetting just needed a tweak to richen the needle to clean up the problem on the transfer into the mid-range power.

When the WR was singing it was hauling ass. The bike is light as a feather, handles great and gives me a trouser movement for fun levels alone.

The TE250 is where things really

get cooking for the white and red. With two E1 enduro world championships on the trot you can feel the pedigree just oozing from the bike. Husqvarna have kept things reasonably simple, ironed out small problems in certain areas and strengthened a great base package over the last couple of years.

There are no bells and whistles and there doesn't need to be. This bike is light, agile and pulls strong from low to high. The Husqvarna has proved time and again this year to be reliable and fast. It may not be the outright fastest bike out there but if the company keep the focus on making the bike useable for the hobby rider as well as the factory racer they are going in the right direction.

The motor on the 250 wants to >>

Capacity: 124.8cc Bore and stroke: 54mm x

54.5mm

Transmission: Six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 9.5 litres
Front suspension: Kayaba
48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: Sachs

(296mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc Rear brake: 240mm disc Seat height: 975mm Wheelbase: 1465mm Ground clearance: 325mm Korb weight: 98kg

Kerb weight: 98kg Price: £5199



Capacity: 249.5cc
Bore and stroke: 79mm x

50.9mm

Transmission: Six-speed Fuel tank capacity: 8.5 litres Front suspension: Kayaba 48mm (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: Kayaba (296mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc Rear brake: 240mm disc Seat height: 950mm Wheelbase: 1470mm Ground clearance: 290mm Kerb weight: 108kg

Price: £6725







be ridden hard but also responds to trail situations well. Traction is on a par with most stock bikes and as with all bikes I test a little personalisation would transform the ride further.

A light engine, light feel and superb, user-friendly power – need I say more? The TE310 is a bit of a favourite for me as it kinda just gets on with the job. It pulls strong, it now handles strong and turns, er, strong! This bike does everything well and is a great all-rounder – a machine that's ready for the weekend trail rider but which is also an awesome base for a weapon to be ridden at the highest level. Just ask Antoine Meo who blasted his 310 to the WEC title against the 450s this year!

There is no drop at any point of the power curve and it will find traction in any tricky situation. The balance on the chassis is good even though I would need to re-spring straight away. The controls all feel sharp and positive, the build quality is up another level from previous years and it seems the BMW connection is

really paying off on the production line. In the past when testing Husqvarnas I've always come away a little frustrated – impressed with their performance but knowing that with a few tweaks and tickles a good bike could be transformed into a great bike.

Well with the 2012 TE310 they've produced a great bike. The Germans have a certain way of doing things and although the partnership was always going to take a little time to settle in the special blend appears to be coming along nicely.

Having said that, it doesn't mean they've got everything spot on and the TE449 is proof in my mind that you cannot get everything right without a few teething pains. This bike was originally developed as a BMW and it has many great features including probably the most user-friendly 450cc motor on earth. I absolutely love the power produced from the engine. It is super-smooth and fantastic for finding traction.

The unique thing about the bike is

the fact that the final drive and swingarm pivot are through the same point. This creates a bike that will search out any available traction as I first discovered in Spain a few years ago when the system was introduced. The small problem I have with the system is when pushing hard on the bike it can get a touch 'flicky' in its handling.

The drive system gives the bike a sensitivity you do not get with any other bike. When the 449 is ridden smooth and easy it will eat up the miles with ease and get you to your destination in complete control, ensuring you arrive with a smile across your chops. The only negative comes when you get a little wild on the bike. But given some time in the saddle you'd get used to the unique handling traits and could adapt your riding style to suit. So like I say, ride it smooth for maximum reward.

Now is there anyone out there who fancies dropping a 449 motor into a 310 chassis and letting me take it for a blast...



SPECIFICATIONS

TE310

Capacity: 302.4cc Bore and stroke: 82mm x 57.3mm

57.3mm

Transmission: Six-speed Fuel tank capacity: 8.5 litres Front suspension: Kayaba 48mm (300mm travel) Rear suspension: Kayaba (296mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc Rear brake: 240mm disc Seat height: 950mm Wheelbase: 1470mm Ground clearance: 290mm Kerb weight: 108kg Price: £6825



TE449

Capacity: 449.6cc Bore and stroke: 98mm x

59.6mm **Transmission:** Six-speed

Fuel tank capacity: 8.5 litres Front suspension: Kayaba 48mm (300mm travel) Rear suspension: Kayaba

(293mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc Rear brake: 240mm disc Seat height: 952mm Wheelbase: 1490mm Ground clearance: 333mm Kerb weight: 113kg

Price: £6925



The 449 demands to be ridden smoothly and with respect – but don't we all!



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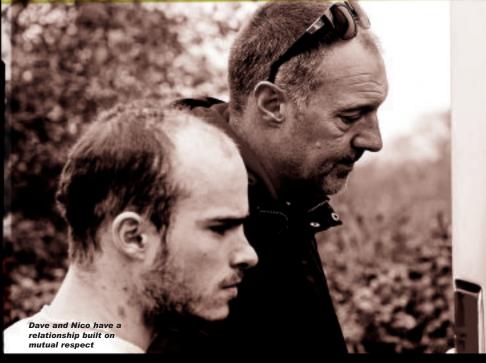


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THE POWER OF DREAMS!

AFTER A DISAPPOINTING 2011 SEASON AT THE HELM OF THE CCM TEAM CAME TO A PREMATURE END, DAVE THORPE'S HOOKED UP WITH HONDA AND IS AIMING FOR BIGGER AND BETTER THINGS IN 2012...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by JP O'Connell

avid Thorpe doesn't really need an introduction but for those of you new to the sport of motocross let me do the honours. He is simply the most successful racer our country has ever produced – a true British MX hero. DT's a four-time world champion, multiple British champion and probably more important than that he's a true gent with no airs and graces.

Dave epitomised professionalism and determination as a rider and has carried these qualities over into team management. I could talk to Dave for hours about his racing days but with his new Buildbase Honda team up and running – plus a Phoenix Tools satellite outfit – the purpose of this interview is to discuss his life after racing. Here's his take on it all, going right back to the beginning...

DBR: How did you move from riding into management?

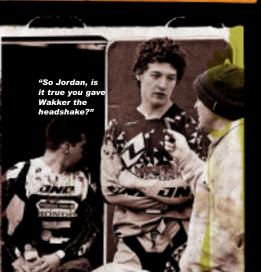
DT: "When I stopped racing the first managerial role I had was when the ACU asked me to become the manager of the MXdN team which was an honour and a great moment because we won it! That was my first real venture and

taste of management on any level. Then after that I rolled into a couple of smaller team ventures – I started with Skymasts Honda in 1995 and that went okay but not long after that the opportunity came along to start the CAT Honda team and that was my first real role as a full-time team manager.

"That was going okay and we were certainly learning a lot as a team but then a few things happened in my private life and I felt I needed to get out of motocross for a bit. I still followed it and was around training a few riders but I never got back into team management until Steve Hyde, who's a friend of mine from Bracknell, spoke to me about the CCM project."

DBR: How did you find that after your previous experiences as a team manager and why did it come to an end?

DT: "The CCM project was a different experience because it was from scratch and collectively the mechanics at Bracknell, Bolton, the riders and everyone involved done well to get where we got. Sadly, that came to an end for numerous reasons but I'm proud of what we achieved."



DBR: When you set up your new Buildbase Honda team did you have any riders in mind or even lined up?

DT: "Of sorts, yeah. I had always had Nicolas [Aubin] in my mind. It was well documented that I tried to get Nicolas on the CCM team for a couple of years. At CCM we'd been spoilt because we, I, had two really professional riders in Tom Church and Stephen Sword. I wanted to move the new team and concept forward with a younger rider with the same professional work ethic I had become accustomed to with those two.

"I went to the GP at Lommel to try and work a deal with Nicolas' management and talk with Giuseppe Luongo regarding racing selected GPs. We didn't have the financial resources to commit to a full GP season and I had heard all the hearsay that if you don't commit to a full GP season you can't get in and I didn't want to make promises to Nicolas, the other riders and Honda if I couldn't deliver.

"I sat down and told Giuseppe that we wanted to be part of what he's creating but at this moment in time we can't compete in a full season and he was really sympathetic, understood where I was coming from and appreciated my honesty. He then assured me an entry to the GPs that we could do so that was a big plus for me."

DBR: So how did the meeting go with Nicolas? DT: "After the meeting with Nicolas" management I didn't think I'd done enough to convince them. Before I left Lommel I went and spoke with Nicolas privately and told him he'd be missing a big opportunity to race in the UK where I believe he'll be very popular and successful, an opportunity to be on a team that is built around him. I had a call from his management 48 hours later asking if I could send a contract through. So although it was a mission to go over there and get all that sorted I'm glad I did, it was definitely worthwhile.'

DBR: Can you pinpoint a reason why the money and support doesn't seem to be in the industry like it was in your racing days? DT: "It's hard to say one thing in particular. I think as a sport we've been left behind in national coverage - certainly in the UK and there are other sports that are well promoted, particularly on TV, because they are easy and cost-effective to cover for TV production companies.

"There's financial inflation, the noise pollution issues, many things but fundamentally if we could get the sport on TV and shown in a positive light we may stand a chance of growing the industry and then the industry will invest back into the sport and we could start to get back to where we were. That's why supercross works and is so important to the industry in America. It's packaged for TV and advertisers see a good return of exposure which is what it's about really."

DBR: As well as Nicolas you also have some good young riders on the team - you must be really excited about working with them... DT: "Yes I am. I think we have two young riders on the Buildbase Honda team with tremendous potential in Jordan Booker and Ryan Houghton. I also think Jackson Evans, who'll be riding for Phoenix Tools, is a huge talent - he just needs to start believing that and understanding what he needs to do.

'We've taken on young Ben Denison to do the Phoenix Tools South West championship and Maarten Cremers will also be racing in them as well as most national events. We've got Dani Marsh on board as our female rider and she'll be having a crack at the women's GPs so we've got a good team that covers

most levels of racing so I'm happy and proud of how it's all come together so far and, as you say, excited about working with them and helping them improve.

"We're also doing a support programme for the Honda 150cc riders at the Red Bull Pro Nationals that runs alongside the Honda Extreme Academy where they can come to the team for advice on the day so I'm excited about that. It's important to the Honda brand and we'll be able to gauge and keep an eye on any future talent."

DBR: You seem to have put together a pretty comprehensive line-up of riders for a new team - wouldn't it be easier to start with just a couple?

DT: "We want to cover all bases. Nicolas doing well in a GP is great for us, for him and our sponsors but does that really sell more Hondas in the UK? So that's why we have a team that can hopefully go and win regionally and nationally at all levels, proving the bike is competitive and reliable. I tried to put a package together that can do everything and I think we're on our way to achieving that. With our vision with the dealer network and trying to get them more involved with the team with our dealer nights and set-up days it's all about trying to get more people involved and associated with the team and motocross."

DBR: How's Nicolas settling in and how are you finding working with him?

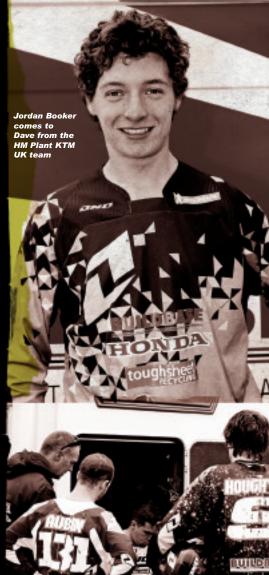
DT: "To be honest, as a person he's more than I expected. I knew his talent, that's why I wanted to work with him. I had my opinions on his strong and weak points regarding his riding. Having now spent some time with him and Ryan [Thorpe - David's son and Nicolas' mechanic] it's obvious he's a class act. Nicolas and Ryan have bonded really well - living together has no doubt accelerated that - so that's great because the rider/mechanic relationship is key to success on the track. He's fitted in exceptionally well, he's thankful for everything, he doesn't take anything for granted, he's a hard worker - basically it's been a pleasure working with him so far and I can only see that getting better and better."

DBR: How do you adapt to working with each rider? Do you ever get frustrated with the riders because they maybe don't do the things you used to do to prepare?

DT: "I've learned down the years there's not a set path for success that everyone has to go down. What worked for me won't necessarily work for someone else and I've had to learn to be more tolerant - a different approach for different people. I've chilled out down the years, not just in the sport but in life in general. I'm nowhere near like I was with the CAT team. I've surrounded myself with good people and my trust for them has only grown stronger down the years and they are all a big part of this team and hopefully the success that will come with it. I may be the man fronting it up but I can't do it without the others.

"When all this was formulated the one thing that was really important to me was to have people around me that I could trust. Trust doesn't come overnight, it comes from knowing people for a long time. When you've got people around you that you know you can rely on then it takes a lot of stress away from certain areas. I know I can talk to my dad, Ryan, Dickie, my wife Gail – she does the finances – and the whole team and put my trust in them for honest advice. I won't always have the same opinion but we always talk it through and come to a compromise. Then all we need is a good roll of the dice on a weekend and everyone is going to be happy."







"The likes of the Watson brothers have loads of potential. Further down from them we have Conrad Mewse and Josh Gilbert to name just another two. Harry Kimber in the 65cc also impressed at the supercross races. They all have bags of potential so I think British motocross talent is as strong as it's been in depth for some time. We just have to keep improving the system and the

events to give them a chance.
"I think the Red Bull Pro National races have raised the bar a little regarding the youth scene and promoting that talent. Now I'm sure other series will follow suit and we'll be able to nurture these riders better than ever before so I think it's looking good. It's important to try and help these kids achieve their dream. If they get to their twenties and no matter the outcome look back and say 'you know what, I gave that my best shot' that's what it's all about."







Dave hopes he can bring out the results to match Jordan's style



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CINQ MINUTES AVEC...

NICOLAS AURIN

DER: How are you settling into your new team? **NA:** "It's been really good and everything is going well, I'm happy to be here. I feel like I've made the right choice. It's never easy to leave home – this is the first time I've lived in a different country but I'm enjoying it. It's nice here and even the food is better than I expected!"

DBR: What made you sign for Buildbase Honda?

NA: "I had two good options really. One was to stay with
HDI KTM because I know the people and we had a
good year but I knew David was really interested in me
and motivated to work with me so that's what really
made my mind up. I had a good feeling about it. I feel
it's a good moment in my career to make the move.
I know what David has achieved and I respect that a lot
so for him to believe in me gives me a lot of confidence
but I don't feel any pressure."

DBR: What are you expectations? Do you follow the British scene?

NA: "No, to be honest I haven't really. I don't really follow any other national championship other than the French one. What I do know is that there are really strong riders in the UK, they are aggressive and fast. I also hear about the tracks and I know they are good. For me the British GP is always one of the best prepared tracks in the championship. I'm not sure what to expect, I just know it'll be tough but I want to win. I'm not here to lose."

DBR: How's your relationship with you new mechanic Ryan?

NA: "It's good. We are both 23 and we are living together so that's good because we'll share interests and have fun. I know him from the past a little bit when he was working with Molson Kawasaki. He's really calm and I like people like that around me, that's what suits me best. I know he's going to listen and do his best to give me everything that I need."

DBR: Do you ever feel the pressure as a manager that you did as a racer?

DT: "No, not really. I certainly don't feel any pressure from anyone else with this new Buildbase team. I always create pressure for myself because that's who I am - I want to win at anything competitive and that will never change! So far we can't be any happier with the way it's going. We are far from being 100 per cent ready for the start of the season right now and if we thought we were then we haven't done enough but we're certainly on track and we'll be fully prepared for that first race. We have a great engine supplier behind us in Multitek and a whole host of quality names in the industry who have come on board like One Industries, Michelin, Rock Oil - too many to mention in one sentence. Also we've got some great, passionate financial sponsors from outside the sport like Buildbase, Doodson, Toughsheet etc and that makes a big difference and is vital to our success.'

DBR: What are your realistic expectations for the team in the first year?

DT: "A British championship would be the ultimate thing for us to win in 2012. I'd like to see Ryan and Jordan really reach their true potential because they are good lads and they are trying hard at what they are doing. In fact, all of them for that matter because I feel they're

not too far away. Success in sport is such a psychological thing — especially in a sport as tough as ours — and I want to help them realise they have good potential and give them the opportunity to achieve their goals. On the Honda side of things we want to help sell more bikes, promote the youth aspect and for everyone to feel part of what we are doing."

DBR: Do you feel any responsibility to put something back into the sport as our greatest racer or is it just something you want to do?

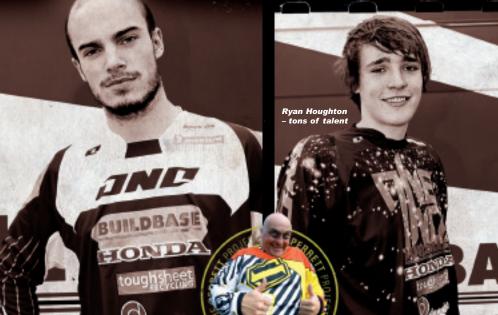
DT: "No, I don't feel any responsibility.

Ultimately the most import thing is for me to be on a motocross bike and if I can't do that then to be around them. I love to be on a motocross bike – that's it. At nearly 50 years of age one of the things that gives me the biggest buzz is being out on my Honda. That's what it's all about and that's what I try to pass on to every rider I work with. We have a laugh when we can but when it needs to be serious we need to be serious because we're doing this professionally."

DBR: Do you ever look back and think you should've had more fun?

DT: "Oh yeah, definitely! For me there were times when it would've been a lot easier if there was more fun involved. I don't know if the outcome would've been the same – no-one does – but that is a small regret looking back."











YEARS SINCE THE OFF-CAMBERED BLUE-GROOVE OF GAILDORF — THE SCENE OF SOME PIVOTAL MX MOMENTS — FIRST FEATURED ON THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

reat to see Gaildorf back in motocross grand prix action in 2011, 35 years after the 'Motorsportclub Gaildorf' first hosted a world championship round.

The fast, slick, sweeping hillside played an occasional but incredibly pivotal part in the 20th Century international arena - 10 world title contests included the brand new, modern-day MX des launched in 1985 and a 250 GP championship decider in 1994. The USA triumphed three times in epic team contests, Kurt Nicoll captured his first 250 GP win and Stefan Everts his last aboard a Honda at the Teutonic track.

Gaildorf lies in beautiful rolling countryside north east of Stuttgart in southern Germany and the club attracted sponsorship from the nearby town of Schwabisch Hall. Founded in 500BC by Celts who settled in the old town near a salt spring, Schwabisch Hall boasts a towering Romanesque church consecrated in 1156 - which has the biggest flight of church steps in Germany where annual open air theatre still celebrates 'The Festival of Salt Boilers', although the salt works closed in 1924!

The fabulous circuit of 'Auf der Wacht' first emerged on to the world stage in 1976, the crucial ninth round of a tight-fought 250 GP series. Sturdy little Russian Vladimir Kavinov trounced the field on his KTM, beating Anatoly Barbarovsky (CZ) and Andre Malherbe (KTM) in race one and Heikki Mikkola (Husqvarna) and American Jim Pomeroy (Bultaco) in the second. This victory hoisted Kavinov to second in the table behind Mikkola. And Evgeny

Bobryshev revived this Eastern tradition with a first moto victory and second overall in this season's MX1 GP!

In 1980 it was the turn of the 500s and another vital stage in the world championship. Malherbe, now on an HRC Honda, led Kawasaki's Brad Lackey by 14 points. But Yamaha's Andre Vromans nicked the first race verdict in greasy conditions, beating Lackey and Malherbe's team-mate Roger De Coster, while Malherbe failed to finish. Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha) swept the second moto from Lackey and overall winner Vromans but Malherbe slithered downfield to eighth place and three meagre points - insufficient to defend the Belgian's championship lead so 'Bad Brad' headed for Namur with a seven-point advantage!

Two years on Gaildorf hosted a terrific 250cc Trophee des Nations team contest. A week after his double MX des win in Switzerland, ginger nutcase Danny 'Magoo' Chandler stormed to an historic four on the trot, leading the USA's quartet to victory despite the tenacious efforts of Belgium and Brits Dave Thorpe, Jem Whatley and Neil Hudson. In a fierce first-race scrap teenagers Thorpe and Whatley finished second and third, brilliantly beating off Harry Everts, Johnny O'Mara, Andre Vromans and home hero Rolf Dieffenbach to lie second, just two points behind the Yanks.

An ailing Thorpe pulled out of race two as O'Mara and David Bailey backed up Chandler for the win but team manager Dave Nicoll realised that if Thorpe rejoined and qualified as a finisher Great Britain would still finish third in front of the Germans. Unfortunately, in his

haste, Thorpey didn't don his gloves - a protest duly went in, David was disqualified and Germany nabbed the final rostrum slot.

When the trophy was presented in Gaildorf's famous beer tent that evening to the American quartet, Belgium and Germany also stepped onto the stage. It was too much for the late, intensely patriotic Dave Smith who burst into inconsolable tears. "That place should have been ours," he wailed as the host nation received their trophy!

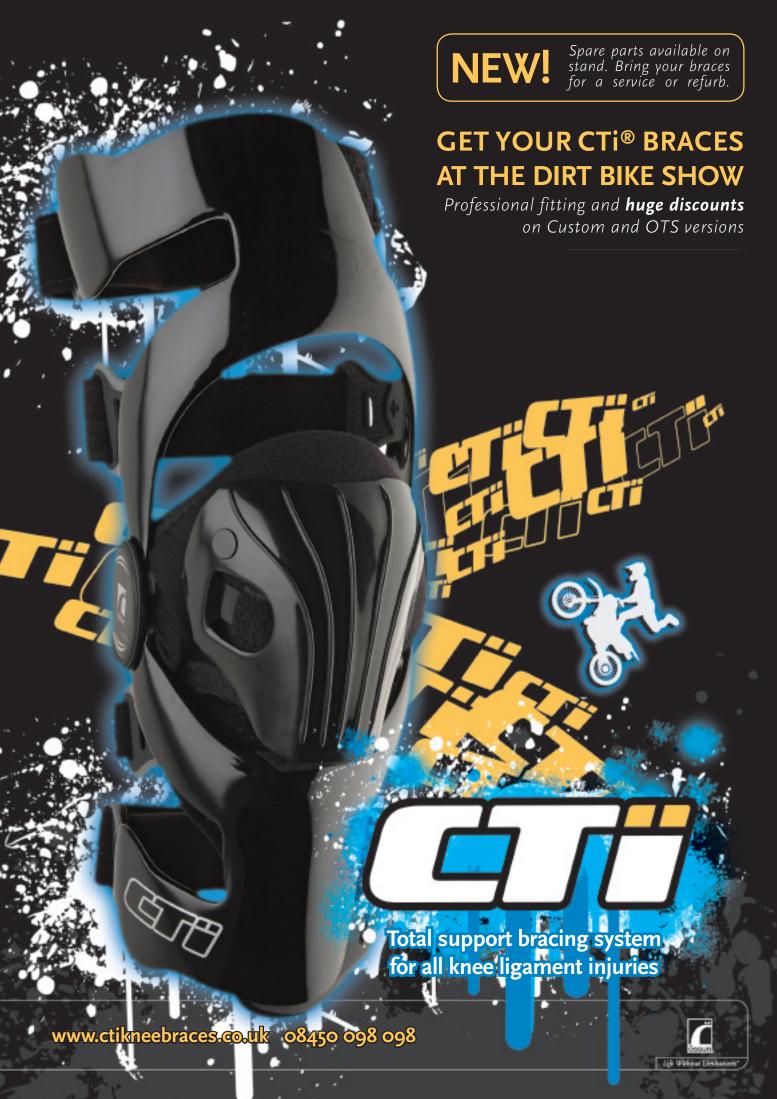
We would return in 1985 for the inaugural new-look Motocross des Nations. How would 125s fare against bigger bikes in the FIM's brave new world? The answer even on the exhilarating, off-cambered blue-groove of Gaildorf - was rather well as 16-year-old Dutchman Davey Strijbos and America's reigning national 125 champ Ron Lechien, both on Hondas, shed blood among the bigger bikes. Lechien even set fastest practice time after a huge dust-up with newly-crowned 500 world champion Thorpe (Honda) and AMA 250 king Jeff Ward (Kawasaki)

What made the event extra special was that all 21 countries lined up on the vast grassy start straight - 60 riders in two rows! Three brilliant battles involving Thorpe, David Bailey (500 Honda), Ward and Dutchman Kees van der Ven (500 KTM) thrilled the 30,000strong crowd while 125 world champ Pekka Vehkonen (Cagiva), Strijbos and Lechien tormented the rest! Thorpe emerged individual victor while the Americans took team honours ahead of the Netherlands and loudly acclaimed home boys Germany.

The MX des would be back >>

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DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT



in 1989 when Jeff Stanton (Honda) led the USA to a more clear-cut victory over the Europeans. Aided by Ward's 250 Kawasaki and Mike Kiedrowski (125 Honda), the dour double champion from Michigan soared to dominant victories.

Then the German 250 GP returned for the final round of 1994 with defending champion Greg Albertyn (Johnson Suzuki) holding a 17-point advantage over Stefan Everts (Kawasaki). Kurt Nicoll had won an international race here in 1987 and he hunted down Everts, sweeping past the race-long leader on the penultimate lap. The Belgian hit back and they slewed side-by-side out of the huge bombhole onto the veranda but despite ducking inside into the last right-hander Kurt couldn't quite push past. Third-placed Albertyn, still nursing a 12-point cushion, took off his helmet and hugged his mum Brenda. "No pressure," he grinned.

Georges Jobe visited old foe Nicoll in the Castrol Honda camp. "I thought you were going to do something when you squeezed inside him on the last corner," rasped Georges. "Did you learn nothing from me in 1992?"

COOL WORLD CHAMP GREG ALDERTYN BESTRODE THE START

STADICHT BEFORE

1994 250 GP







rivals in the parc ferme prior to race two and in the first turn his championship was virtually won as a multiple pile-up felled Everts. Nicoll reached second place behind Yves Demaria by half-distance and knew a maiden 250 GP victory would be his while Everts fought through the pack. Finally, in that last turn, he achieved his burning ambition to knock sixth-placed Albee momentarily off the track yards from the chequered flag! But it was to no avail and Greg ripped off his helmet again. "Bloody hell," he breathed quietly, "it's over..." before giving

He could head Stateside as world champion while Kurt savoured the fruits of victory. "I'm that old now that people must feel sorry for me," he laughed. "Albee's dad, the Yamaha team, Georges and Eric Geboers – they were all out there cheering me on!"

Brenda another hug.

Music throbbed from the Suzuki bus across a paddock bathed in mellow evening sunshine as a deliriously happy team, supporters and family were joined by Greg's former Honda mentor Jan de Groot who had guided him to his first two world crowns. Jan was now Everts' team manager at Kawasaki! "Thanks for everything, mate," said the sporting South African apologetically. "I told you you'd have to wait until next year..."

Two summers later elegant Swede Peter Johansson won the 1996 German 500 GP at Gaildorf on a Husqvarna. The following season it was the turn of current KTM competitions boss Pit Beirer to claim a hugely popular home win on his 250 PAMO Honda. And finally Everts, by now a triple 250 world champion, returned to the scene of his biggest disappointment to grab his

43rd and final 250cc grand prix – the last he ever won on a Honda!



-ROUNDER

SWEET SUZUKI'S SEEN SOME ACTION S SUMMER AND ALTHOUGH THE WILD TER IS FAST APPROACHING ITS WORK

Words and photo by Sutty

ince we took delivery of our Suzuki RMX450Z way back in the spring it's seen some serious action. Straight off the bat we pimped our ride to make it race ready for The Tough One before an off-road track day or two led into a half-season of flat track racing and even a timed Tarmac hill climb.

While there's been a lot of part swapping going on it's all been about basic maintenance, meeting different technical regulations, crash damage and the addition of needless bling. The Suzuki has been solid and it's fair to say that if it weren't for user error this whole project would have been spectacularly unspectacular which is probably a good sign for all Suzuki owners because the RMX seems to be solid even though the quality of the fasteners seems worse than on previous models.

With the flat track season over for another year and the indoor race at Christmas postponed due to issues with the venue it seemed silly to keep the RMX in FT trim. With a bunch of all-weather motocross tracks available to use this winter I figured it'd be nice to pound out some motos since it's been a while

If you saw the RMX at the DBS you'll have seen that it's received a bit of a makeover with all-new Pro-Decals graphics expertly fitted on Polisport plastics (a rare old mix of RM-Z 250 and 450 panels I might add), new Pro-Taper bars and grips, an Apico rear brake lever and a new chain and sprocket set. Since then I've made a trip to KAIS to get my suspension returned to enduro spec and pick up some new fasteners - fitted my Hollis 21 inch front wheel and brake

assembly, changed the Maxxis DTR-1 on the rear for a new Maxx-Cross SI and fitted some Renthal Intellilevers that'll no doubt get tested as I hit the track once or twice this winter.

I'm actually really excited to get out there because I know the RMX is going to make an excellent motocross machine for an older guy like myself. In stock trim the motor is probably a bit too potent for enduro use although it can be taken in the right direction for that kind of tight n twisty going with the right pipe - the Leo Vince we tested earlier in the year is a good example of this although the bike still remained a handful and stalled easier than we'd have liked.

Luckily the electric start button is on hand for those annoying stally moments which is a godsend for almost everyone but essential for me as my right knee is so ropey that kickstarting a bike is impossible without causing huge amounts of pain. To be honest I'd rather finish it off for good by twisting my leg in a rut or hyper-extending it in a hole than attempting to start my motor so the RMX is ideal for my needs - either that or something from the 2012 KTM range.

Traditionally enduro suspension is a wee bit soft for motocross use but I don't foresee it being a problem for me as I'm not all that fast and since Wakker showed me the way of good suspension set-up with our CRF project back in 2006 I'm more than willing to run my boingers on the soft side - man, that bike handled sweet! We'll see what happens and if we need to go stiffer then that's what we'll do but I can't see it being a necessity.

Until next month y'all keep it shiny





IT WAS MADE ONLY YESTERDAY BUT THERE'S BEEN PLENTY OF WORK GOING ON INSIDE N'ALL...

Words by Rob Bayman Photos by Andrew Walch

ny numpty with a tool kit can pull a motor down but as always there is a right and a wrong way to build an engine. Over the years I have built motors in some pretty extreme conditions - a total engine rebuild by candlelight or on the seafront at Le Touquet with snow and sand blowing everywhere. Then there was the little matter of fettling '87 Daytona US SX winner Ricky Ryans' Suzuki in the parc ferme at the Irish GP in '89 when his cylinder was cracked in two!

Just as with the three scenarios above, Project Shed 3 is not without its pressures - the rebuild has plenty of eyes on it so has to be right. The 30-year-old YZ465H needs to be bang on the money and prove itself from the first start-up and continue throughout the 2012 racing season.

One big problem we've faced was impossible to predict. The chilling temperature drop has contracted the parts stored outside and because to counter the chill I've whacked the central heating up it's expanded the parts kept in the warmth of my house. Heating the casings is the only way forward but has produced lots of surface moisture and condensation!

The original bearings shared ambient temperatures and all came out with just a slide hammer and bearing extractors but, as expected, stunk to high heaven after sitting for all those years. Pressing in the new bearings was a nervous job with lots of local heat from a blow torch and some persuasion from the 15-ton press accompanied by clinched arse cheeks at every creek of the metal in case the casings split. Undoubtedly the 465 has the tightest bearing casings I have ever worked with and for the first time in ages the working conditions were perfect! Perhaps I should have done it by candlelight in a windy awning with just a lump hammer?

The YZ casings came back from PJ Motorcycle Engineers freshly coated and looking sensational. For the first time ever I was instantly satisfied with an engine coating - the preparatory work had ensured no build-up of the coating medium in the bearing housings, threads and mating faces and that alone saved countless hours of dressing. The satin black finish is great too.

It was good to see the transformation from the rusty bucket of crock rot and it is only by comparing the stages we truly appreciate the quality of the work. Painting can look good but, let's face it, paint is not a suitable option for a motocross bike that will be raced in all weathers as the first wet outing will remove half the paint from the clutch casing and show every stone chip.

The aluminium crank casings - like most open class engines - are substantial by design with steel insert collars the rear mounting point, a less common configuration replaced by the economical route of unprotected aluminium seen today. Heavy webs are plentiful to keep the crank running balanced in true alignment and just generally more aluminium than is truly needed in each crank casing half - a true sign of pre-cost and pre-weight saving times but notably less consumable throughout the whole engine as it was designed and built to last.

The clutch casing rather than following the aluminium trend of the era is super-light magnesium even with the coating it weighs a spooky 465g. But nursing the built-up motor for a series of photographs was a serious reminder that it was made of sturdy stuff as it felt like it weighed a ton.

New 6306C3 main bearings were installed after being left in the freezer overnight to contract them a little while the crank casings sat on a radiator for a few hours to expand them. Not exactly rocket science but it made the job easier. Arguments exist about putting bearings on a crank first or in the casings first but I've never found any extra benefit either way. As the bearings remained in the casings when I split the mill that's how they have gone back.

The YZ shares identical main bearings in each half of the casings although the seals are widely different to take the primary drive on one side and the flywheel axle on the other Unlike many later two-stroke engines, both crank seals can be changed without splitting the motor.

The PS3 magneto cover is plastic which looks tatty - I did find a new one on eBay but after pondering paying £50 for a piece of plastic I decided that I could not justify the cost as the original should recover well enough with a bit of dressing and a gallon of silicone spray.

The new big end assembly includes the con-rod, crank pin, thrust washers and big end bearing. Our retired big end was pretty healthy on a load test but damage to the small end was beyond recovery and we weren't about to take any chances. Fortunately, splitting the crank gave us opportunity to clear all the surface rust from the crank webs - although when I say us, I should hand credit to Ashley at PJME for his excellent work in rejuvenating the crank to its present immaculate condition.

Confession time now! I committed a great faux pas (French for dropping a bollock) by failing to notice we were missing the complete exhaust system. Whoops! Our usual first port of call would be DEP every time but checking their website revealed they only make a YZ465 tail pipe. My natural reaction was to call AG Systems who in my opinion make the most beautiful hand-crafted complete exhausts on the

whole planet, although Greenie's passion for all things equestrian and lack of industry support has quenched his interest to build pipes. Perhaps if I can find a few more customers for a YZ/IT465/490 pipe I can lure him from the stable and back into the workshop to make a batch - let me know if you are interested via email at notetorobin@gmail.com and I will see if I can raise his interest to craft a few.

The motor - now rebuilt and looking like a million dollars - has been treated to a re-bore, big end and rod kit, new Wiseco Piston kit and small end bearing, engine bearing suite, seals and gasket set. It's been fully vapour blasted to bare metal then cleaned, checked and coated although for now still retains the original port configuration. Only after we run the bike on the MX Zone dyno to find the perfect set-up will we consider internal modifications - although stories that the 465 was well acquainted with blistering top speeds in excess of 100mph may deter me from seeking more power from this particular projectile.

I still recall that detonation noise from the big bore lump when amplified by the reverberation of the YZingers' air cool fins can be slightly disturbing so I plan to experiment with various carbs to see if I can reduce the annoying din through fuelling combinations at low end. I believe Yamaha addressed this issue in '82 by adding the 'J' boost bottle which stored mixed fuel in a chamber plumbed to the intake manifold between the closed throttle slide and the closed reeds, making a volatile charge available the instant the throttle was twisted.

It's highly unlikely that mere up-jetting will offer a solution as the technical brains at Yamaha's R&D departments never truly overcame this phenomenon so a boost bottle could be the solution. But perhaps later technology will have a solution that the early Mikuni didn't offer? Silence was always compromised by power and as lead's been removed from fuel since the bike's hey-day I anticipate a worse reaction unless we raise the exhaust port a degree or two.

The reeds of the YZ are steel and in perfect condition with all petals still sealing properly. No doubt the effect of composite material petals can again be measured when we hit the dyno along with finding the answer to the question about whether or not a boost bottle actually made any recordable difference.

I also got word from ProAction this month that my suspension internals are ready and back in the UK and I never have any doubts about working with Neal. Together we make our suspension do exactly what we ask from it but this will be a tough task as boy did the YZ know how to pitch you over the bars in the braking bumps with its limited function linear suspension geometry.





REDEMPTION!

There have been lean times in MX grands prix for Honda since Fred Bolley's 250cc title back in Y2K but Paolo Martin and his band of brothers are threatening to turn things around for Big Red...

Words and photos by JP O'Connell

ne of the most enduring memories I'll take from the 2011 MX1 world championship is of Honda World Motocross Team Manager Lorenzo Resta sinking to his knees as Evgeny Bobryshev crossed the line to seal a double win at Teutschenthal.

Since Honda's golden years throughout the '80s and '90s when they won 24 world championships there has been little to celebrate with Frederic Bolley's 250cc title back in 2000 being Honda's last. But in 2011 things changed and with Honda determined to regain some of that former glory a partnership was struck with the long-standing Martin Honda team. The result is the factory-supported Honda World Motocross Team with riders Bobryshev and Rui Goncalves.

Martin Honda has had a presence in the paddock since 1991 when team owner Paolo Martin turned his back on spannering, deciding that the only way of getting exactly what he wanted within a team was to run it himself. Having followed the GP tour throughout 1982 as a fan, Paolo became a nechanic and span the spanners for Michele Margarotto during the '83 and '84 seasons.

"I did this for fun, for a passion," remembers Paolo. "I worked during the week as a carpenter and then as a mechanic at the weekend – I was not paid but I got to see the world. I saw many different countries and this just increased my passion for the mechanical side of things.

"I make my first year as a professional mechanic in '85 with Michele Fanton at Yamaha. I spent two years there and we win the Italian championship and we win some 250 races in the world championship. In '87 I went back to Margarotto, for '88 I was with Mauro Lucchiari, then '89 and '90 was back with Michele Fanton at Carpi Suzuki where we finished fourth and fifth in the world championships.

"At the end of 1990 I had to make a decision, I would either stop or I would have to make my own team. The problem comes when you are working with people

involved in the selling side of motocross, it is two different mentalities completely. I wanted to be able to get parts, have my own budget and not have to compete within the team for things."

So Paolo and brother Maurizio, armed with sponsorship from casual clothing manufacturer Chambers, approached Italian Honda importer HM Moto. At the time the motocross market was particularly buoyant and having listened to the brothers' plans HM Moto made a very healthy investment into the fledgling Chambers Honda team for 1991. Their first signing was former 125cc champ Trampas Parker to ride a 250.

"In 1990 my bike was running very well in the world championship and Trampas was always watching out for my bike," recalls Paolo. "Also, at the time he was living in Italy, very close to my house. We had a very good relationship and when he got into a fight with KTM he started looking at the possibility of riding for me in the next season. He signed for '91 and we had an excellent season.

"In the last moto of the season he crash and wreck the handlebar and had a problem with the front brake but still he finish sixth and he win the championship by one point over Mike Healey and Alex Puzar. The following year we also had a good year — we signed Jean-Michel Bayle and he won the supercross world title for us. I was team owner, team manager and mechanic, back then it was possible — now it's not so possible!"

As well as running the motocross team Paolo and Maurizio were also running their own Honda motocross dealership and workshop with Maurizio concentrating on the retail side of things while Paolo took care of the racing duties.

"When you have a shop and you are only working for Honda and only for motocross you have many friends. In that time in Italy it was very big business and everybody would send some money for the team. I had many friends that were small sponsors and between them we had a good budget to go racing. But it was for sure not a budget like a factory team."

As the '90s progressed money

became tighter so the team had to become smaller. This wasn't too much of a problem but when Honda Europe switched headquarters from Italy to the UK things took a turn for the worse.

"When Honda moved form Italy to the UK it made one big hole," remembers Paolo. "In '96 or '97 Dave Grant went to Honda and he promised them a very big team with the big sponsor Radson and with Stefan Everts as rider. Honda didn't want to spend much money as their main focus was on road racing so they said to Grant that 'okay you are the factory team' and I was left waiting with no money. So again I have to make a very small team."

After the '97 season Honda switched their resources to PAMO Honda with Bolley winning the title for them in '99 and again in Y2K. But despite the success rumours were rife that Bolley hadn't been paid for two seasons and one month before the start of the '01 campaign Paolo received a phone call from the racing boss of Honda Europe asking whether he would be prepared to take the complete PAMO team — including the bikes and parts — and go to Spain to help Bolley.

"For me it was a difficult decision," explains Paolo. "I had made a small team with just two riders for the world championship, never was it possible to take everything and try to go racing in one week. At the last minute I decided to try it and we picked up the spares and bikes and went down to Spain. At the time I had a good sponsor in UFO and they paid for everything – the salary for Bolley, everything. Unfortunately, for sure it was a disaster!

"It's impossible to have a good season when you take a bike and rider two days before the first GP of the year. Bolley had not been riding through the winter, his mind was destroyed, he had won two titles and not been paid!"

As the '02 season hadn't worked out quite how anybody had hoped, Honda decided to withdraw their support from Paolo and instead backed the Berni Honda team that was running Pit Beirer, Josh Coppins, Alessio 'Chicco' Chiodi and Yves Demaria.

"Berni promised lots of big things but within three years it was a disaster again," says Paolo. "Honda did not go with me because I did not have money - they would have had to spend money with me. With Berni they didn't have to spend anything because he promised that he had the money - he was from a very big family in Italy - but again it all went wrong!"

It was around about this time that four-strokes became the weapon of choice in the premier class and with this change in technology came a big change in Paolo's fortunes.

"This was a very good time for me, it changed everything completely," says Paolo. "I went to school for three months to learn the change - I try to forget my history in two-stroke and I start a new life with the four-stroke. This for me is the main reason why the team with the technical side is at such a good level. Every year at the end of the season I will spend a week improving my understanding of the technology."

A sponsorship deal with Tiscali gave Paolo the money to expand in '03. The season was a good one and Tiscali agreed to Paolo's request to sign two-time 250cc champ Mickael Pichon for 2004. As well as the rider change there was also an important change within the team as '04 also saw the arrival of Lorenzo Resta, initially to take care of team hospitality before later taking on the role of Team Manager.

"I was working in MotoGP and at the end of the season I had signed a contract to run Yamaha's hospitality for '04," remembers Lorenzo. "During the off-season I did some hospitality work for Paolo at a boat regatta and I guess we met for maybe 20 minutes. During that time he must have got a good impression of me and I had the same of him so the connection was made. He rang me later and asked if I would at Martin," explains Roger. "Right from the run Martin Honda's hospitality for '04 but of course I had already signed for Yamaha.

"In November Yamaha signed Valentino Rossi and Valentino brought all of his own staff and crew over from Honda - basically I went from having two job offers to having no job! Luckily, Paolo's people got back in touch and I finally

signed for the team."

With Pichon at the helm the results were good for the next couple of seasons with the Frenchman taking six overalls and second in the championship in '04 plus a further two GP overalls and fifth in the championship in '05. Coinciding with the team's good fortunes was the introduction of Honda's Roger Harvey onto the GP scene, someone who has been instrumental in paving the way for the collaboration between Martin Honda and the Japanese factory.

"I was working with Honda UK on the road race side but for '05 I was asked to become responsible for the motocross side of things and that's how I linked in to what was happening start we have worked well together, we would discuss things and we would go forward. Honda provided a small budget for the team but nothing from Japan as regards the technical side of things - everything was done by Martin Racing Technology.

Providing a link to the Japanese factory,



dirtbike



RUI GONCALVES

Age: 26 DoB: 17-05-85 Nickname: RG

ears racind.

"I did my first race in 1993 so 18 years."

Achievements:

"For sure the second place in the MX2 world championship in '09, also winning my home GP in Portugal the same year. Obviously now this year I had my first MX1 podium so that was a great achievement."

Ambitions:

"My dream has always been to be world champion, I was really close in '09 and managed to get second. I always work within my mind that I want to be the best, I want to race at the highest level and I want to win that world title. I will work with this target until the end of my career. I would like to think maybe I could race the AMA one day but at the moment my priorities are in the world championships."

Biggest rival:

"I don't know really, I think everyone is the same out there. There's a lot of guys riding really fast and my goal is to be up front. I respect everyone but when you're racing, you're racing and you want to beat everyone."

The team:

"It was a big change coming here after five years with KTM. The bike is completely different – the chassis, the engine, suspension, the brand of tyres, everything is new – so it took me some time to get used to it. We're working together with Japan and that's been a big key of fitting the bike to myself and together with the team we're changing small details to suit my riding style. The atmosphere within the team is great, everyone is doing their job 100 per cent. Being with a team like this makes you feel confident and makes you work harder towards your goals, it's been great working with them and it's a great atmosphere. It's a pleasure for me to be here and I'm proud to be a part of this project."

Harvey worked tirelessly to build up a solid relationship and to get the factory to believe in Martin Honda's capabilities. With the Japanese super-cautious it's been a slow and sometimes frustrating progression for the team but as the trust has developed so has the amount of interest from Japan.

"We had more people coming from Japan, more people looking," says Roger, "and these people would go back to Japan and tell the factory that 'hey, they're not so bad these guys'. Basically, that's where my connection is – pushing the Japanese, not Martin, into thinking that this is where they need to be. We had a plan and they liked to see that we had something structured in place."

With the factories no longer interested in turning up with their own trucks and structure they're looking for partners and Martin's presentation and technical expertise made them ideal candidates. The Martin bikes and engines are renowned for being some of the best in the paddock with all the work done in-house at the team's 1500sqm workshops, situated just outside Venice.

The building is split into three sections – one containing the sales offices, one housing the customer service centre and one containing the all-important race section.

Martin Honda have 18 full-time employees –

seven work on the steady flow of motocross bikes that come through the doors for servicing, repairs and suspension work while the other 11 make up the GP race team.

As invited guests we're allowed access into the state-of-the-art team workshop which has a full dyno room, machine shop, suspension bay, engine bay and, of course, the bikes themselves. Even with the season finished there is plenty of work going on with mechanics Nino D'Orazio (Bobryshev), Roger Shenton (Goncalves) and chief mechanic Marcus Pereira de Freitas busying themselves building up bikes.

As Roger takes us through the various trick bits on Rui's steed it becomes apparent that Martin Racing Technology do far more than just put the bikes together. The carbon fibre fuel tank, covers and protectors are all designed by Paolo and Marcus and their work is of such a high standard that Pro Circuit, GEICO Honda and American Honda all order various bits and pieces from the Italian team. As well as the carbon the team also produce their own footpegs, triple clamps, engine hangers, radiators, hydraulic clutches and suspension valves that are used on the practice bikes in order to keep costs down.

The team take two 60 foot transporters to every GP – one for hospitality, the other >>>





LORENZO ON...

Brian Jorgensen

"Stylish, absolutely stylish!"

Mickael Pichon

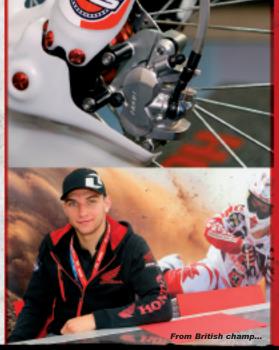
"Hot-headed! Working with him could be quite painful but he was very deep and emotional. It was a strange relationship because you wanted to suffer knowing that after the suffering results would come!"

Pascal Leuret

"I have to say that he too was hot-headed but with him it was easy to work because he was a guy that came from nothing – he was thankful for absolutely everything and he was a great rider, a great guy."

Marc de Reuver

"Crazy! Crazy and funny, the funniest guy that I have ever met in the paddock. This will sound strange but I think the biggest obstacle in his career is his talent because even without any training he knew he could get results in the sand — as such he probably didn't put in as much effort as he should."





containing four complete bikes, a spare engine, forks and shock for each rider and enough spares to build two bikes from scratch. With the trucks covering 60,000km per season the fuel bill alone comes in at around 30,000 Euros!

As budgets were slashed throughout the latter half of the decade it was more important that the team survived and maintained a presence in the paddock, rather than spending too much on riders. For '08 Marc de Reuver was signed after his acrimonious split with Yamaha and it wasn't long before he put smiles back on the team's faces with GP wins in Italy and Benelux.

The following season saw Marc joined by Kevin Strijbos and an excellent pre-season had everyone within the team expecting big things. Unfortunately, injuries to both riders meant that for over half the season Martin Honda didn't have a rider out on track.

"At the end of '09 Roger said to us that we need to survive, that there is no possibility of a good budget," explains Lorenzo. "He said that he wanted to keep us as a team in the world championship but that to do it we all needed to be strong and be prepared to make sacrifices and that if we do this for 2010 then probably for 2011 we will have a much better budget. And

that was the way it was."

With Honda's interest in motocross reignited – and after five years collaboration via Harvey – Martin and Honda Japan finally put pen to paper and a three-year factory partnership was signed at the beginning of 2011.

"Everything is now crossed between us," explains Paolo. "If we have an idea or there is something that we want to do we take it to them, like we took our suspension technology to them. It's cross fertilization of information. The Japanese want to learn.

"For me the first time they came to Europe testing and they saw our workshop and the technology inside, I think they were very surprised. Until they saw it I really don't think they believed we had it. After that we had a very good collaboration. We make some parts here in Italy and some parts they make in Japan, we send information to them and they send information to us. It's all pretty tight."

With the new partnership in place the re-named Honda World Motocross Team isn't what you could call a full-factory affair – more a factory-supported effort with the team receiving bikes, parts and R+D from the factory.

"The support comes from different places," explains Harvey. "Japan supply the

EVGENY BOBRYSHEV

Age: 23 DoB: 13-11-87 Nickname: Bobby

Voors rooind.

"I started when I was seven years old so it must be about 16 years."

Achievements

"I have my British MX1 championship and then for sure it was my victory in Teutschenthal, it was an unbelievable feeling. The last lap I was so nervous, three corners from the end Tony tried to pass but I blocked the line — when I looked back and saw him standing there it was such a relief!"

Amhitions.

"For sure I think every rider would like to be world champion, I know it wouldn't be easy but I want to get as high as possible. I would like to ride supercross but I have never ridden the American tracks. I rode the

I have never ridden the American tracks. I rode the I have never ridden the American tracks. I rode the Belfast SX but in America the tracks are completely different – more dangerous – so if I want to go there I must do lots of training."

iggest rival:

"To be honest I respect all of the riders because when you are racing you need to respect them. If you don't then you don't know what can happen at the end off the day, you know what I mean?"

The team:

"Being here has really changed my life, it's really turned it upside down but in a good way. The team are so professional, I've never been anywhere like it before and to start with I found it a bit difficult but now I have gotten used to it. It's good to know that I have a really good crew so when I have a difficult moment they are there next to me, helping me. I feel that if anyone can help me become a champion then this team can, we are all putting 100 per cent into this. The bike is unbelievable, so easy to ride, you can do anything you want with it because it really fits so well."







LORENZO ON...

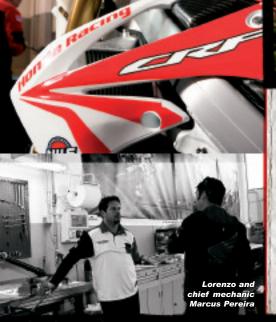
"Bobby is the son that I didn't have when I was 18 years old. For me he is like a big baby - I call him the gentle giant because not only is he a cool guy but he is nice inside, he is a good boy that will grow into a good man in the future. I really feel that our relationship is quite close to that of father and son."

Rui Goncalves

"Rui is a great guy and is one of the most professional guys that I have met during my time in motocross. He is physically 100 per cent prepared. Technically he is really, really good but probably doesn't have as much natural talent as some of the guys but he gets over this by putting in such a lot of hard work. He is very hard on himself because I think sometimes he asks too much of himself. He is very polite and highly intelligent – 10 years ago when he arrived in Belgium for the first time he spoke only Portuguese, now he speaks seven languages.

Kevin Striibos

"He did not have brilliant results but one word sums up his time here - unlucky. 'The Kid' is a good man, just very unlucky - he has a huge talent and is a very hard worker but if something could go wrong, it went wrong!"







technical support, Honda Europe money and sponsors money. That's pretty much how it's structured with Japan mainly supplying technology, development, research and the ability to move the whole thing forward."

With such big investment into the team the choice of riders was critical to the success of the partnership and 12 months ago a decision was made between Martin Honda and Japan to bring in the then British champion Bobryshev and out-of-contract KTM rider Goncalves. While results weren't immediate, things are now certainly heading in the right direction.

"If you look at the season's statistics it's impressive," explains Lorenzo. "We had a plan at the beginning of the season - our target was to put one of our riders in the top five and we

finished with Bobby in fourth and Rui in sixth. We used the start of the season just to build up the riders and let them get used to the bike.

"At the start of the season Paolo said that we would be showing our true potential by the Swedish GP, since then we have been on the podium 10 times and have Bobby's GP overall. I am so proud to say this. This is just the beginning and I think the best is yet to come."

With the entire partnership – including the riders' contracts - based on a three-year deal, everything is on the up. When the passion and drive of both the owner and manager is matched by that of every other member of the team it makes for a formidable combination that will do everything in its power to put an end to the 11-year championship drought.





PAOLO ON

"Trampas Parker for me is the best rider, he made my dream come true by winning the championship. In '91 he was incredible – working really, really hard every day. It was a special time for me, Trampas was living at my home and we were like brothers

"In '92 his mentality changed completely, the GP format was changed to three motos and it drove him crazy and destroyed everything good that he had done in '91. He had always trained for two 40-minute plus two motos, when they changed to three 30-minute motos he made so many mistakes. His biggest weapon had been his fitness and endurance.

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PANDES!

ONE OF THE MAIN MEN IN IRELAND FOR THE LAST DECADE, TOMMY MERTON WAITED UNTIL 2010 TO WIN HIS FIRST IRISH CROWN AND THEN SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED IT IN 2011...

Interview and photo by Robert Lynn

ommy Merton is one of the longest-serving riders in the Irish motocross paddock. In 2000 he won his first major adult title - the Ulster 125 championship – but it took another 10 years for him to finally win his first Irish Motocross Championship. Now, at the age of 29, he's just locked down two national championships in the space of two years. We caught up the G&G Ross Irish MX1 champ to get his insight into the 2011 title chase...

DBR: Congratulations Tommy, your second Irish championship in two years!

TM: "Thanks, I'm happy to have retained the championship for another season. Having won it last year the goal was always to try and win it again this year but that's easier said than done. I've had a good run this year winning the Irish championship and also wrapping up the Ulster MX2 championship. I nearly won the Ulster MX1 as well so it's been one of my best seasons to date.

DBR: Has this championship been harder to retain than it was to win?

TM: "Last year was different because I was pushing to win my first Irish title whereas this year I was racing to keep it so in a way that added more pressure not to lose it. It's been a long, tough season, I broke a few fingers and toes along the way but I never gave up or lost sight of my goals and just tried to deal with my problems as best I could. For certain there were times I wasn't the fastest rider out there but I've learnt the hard way over the years that it's not always the fastest guy that wins - it's about knowing how to win a championship and how to be the best guy over the entire year. If you can limit the damage on your bad days and bring home as many points as you can every day it's up to everyone else to match it after that!"

DBR: Talk us through the final round of the championship. Although you had a good points cushion to work from you still couldn't afford to sit back and relax.

TM: "I knew coming into the final round what I needed to do and where I needed to finish to be champion but it was a tough track to race. It wasn't easy to pass on and everyone was able to run similar speeds. I started bad in the opening race and had to come through the pack. When it started raining in the middle of the race the track got really slippery, I almost crashed a few times so although I had a shot at getting third I played it safe and settled for fourth."

DBR: With Richard Bird and Robert Hamilton and came away with some top five results." crashing in the first corner of the second race the championship nearly got settled right there. What went through your mind when you saw them hit the dirt? TM: "My start was almost perfect and I got through the corner in second so I didn't really know what was going on until I got my first pit signal but I knew something had happened – you can sort of sense those crashes going on behind you! At that moment I thought I might have had it and the maths were working overtime in my head! But fair play to Richard, he recovered well and took it down to the final race. Sitting on the start line for the final race of the year I had a 16-point advantage and needed seventh or better to win the title. Once I got

to fourth I played it safe and rode for the championship. It was such a relief to see that chequered flag!"

DBR: The title race completely changed focus at the halfway point in the season when we lost championship leader Wayne Garrett through injury...

TM: "When Wayne got injured it completely changed the championship, suddenly I wasn't fighting him for race wins and instead I had a 34-point advantage over my nearest rival Richard Bird. I knew with three rounds and nine races left to go that it had become my championship to lose.

The following round in Doon was mentally tough. I'd crashed with another rider during the first race and put a small hole in the engine casing. We couldn't fix it properly and I had to ride carefully all day but I managed to only lose four points. I gained another two points in the penultimate round so I knew coming into the final I could win it. But I still wanted to win races and took them when I could."

DBR: You won your first major adult championship 10 years ago but until last year you'd never won an Irish - now you've got two so what's changed?

TM: "In the past the Ulster championship had been the most dominant championship of the two, it had been the one to win. Everyone was focused on winning that and for a while the Irish championship fell by the wayside. Now that's changed and in the last five years the Irish championship has become more established. It's now an eight-round championship and there's a bigger incentive to win it - everyone wants to be an Irish champion and I think that's the way it should have always been. Personally the only thing I feel that's changed for me is my bike. Last year I began riding Kawasaki for Norman Watt Motorcycles and since then things have been working for the better!"

DBR: Aside from the Irish MX1 title what have been the season's other highlights? TM: "Overall it was a pretty good season and along with winning the Irish championship, wrapping up the Ulster MX2 was another big moment for me. I think being able to win both titles in the same season showed that I'm just as fast on either bike.

"I also really enjoyed the Brian Bell International at Downpatrick. A lot of foreign riders showed up including Jonathan Barragan and Mickael Pichon. The organisers laid on a great event with some long tough motos, I felt good all day

DBR: It seems like you've been at the forefront of Irish motocross forever but are there aspects of your game you still need to work on?

TM: "With the championship now changed to three 20-minute races the pace of the race has also changed with it. It's become more of a sprint than when we raced for 30 minutes. I always seem to come on strong at the end of a moto and I think I'm still in that old-school frame of mind but sometimes by then it's become too late to push for the win. I think I need to work on my starts a lot more and be up front from the beginning, I've got the pace at the end of the race to win but I'm making it hard on myself by not being in the hunt

right from the drop of the gate."

DBR: What's been your overall opinion of this year's championship?

TM: "The racing this year has been really close and very competitive. There's a lot of strong talent coming through at the minute. However, we missed out some tracks this year that weren't on the calendar. We didn't use Desertmartin and I think it's the best track in this country, if not one of the best in Europe. Some of the tracks we race are not up to what the standard of an Irish championship [track] should be and when it comes to our national championship we've got to put our best foot forward and run on the best tracks we've got."

DBR: If you could change anything about the sport what would it be?

TM: "To see some international races return this season has been good as there's been a drought for a couple of years now. Having the Maxxis British championship and the Red Bull Pro Nationals as well as the Brian Bell International has made things exciting again and it's always cool to race with some of the GP riders.

"But, in general, the start of the season sees all the classes with full grids and everyone's hyped up about going racing but for some reason it fades a little as the season goes on. I think there are too many different types of championships going on and I think we need to look at that. Maybe we should do away with both the Irish and Ulster championships and have just one big national championship spread out over 15 rounds - like how the Maxxis British championship is run. At the moment there are too many championships to focus on whereas if they were all combined it could be a more prestigious championship to win."

DBR: At 29 years old what keeps you motivated and driven to keep winning week-in, week-out?

TM: "I get my motivation in places people wouldn't think of looking. There's times someone will say something negative about me - even this year people said I was too old to win again - but I don't rise to what they say. I don't give them that satisfaction, instead I store it in the back of my mind and use it on race day. Thing's like that push me on and keep me driven as a rider. My goal though has been to win 10 titles - that's been a target I've always aimed for. I need another three so I can't quit just yet!"

DBR: We hear you also get to keep your championship bike too?

TM: "Last year when I won the Irish championship they let me keep my winning bike and we joked about keeping it again if I won this year so I'll have to pull them up on that, though I won't be needing a bigger trophy cabinet just yet - these are workable trophies!"

DBR: Finally, a team is about more than just the rider – who else makes these championships happen?

TM: "Without the help of Norman Watt Motorcycles, Phil Coulter from No Fear clothing and energy drink, Brian and Davey my mechanics, PMP Motorsports for my suspension, Noel O'Leary and my girlfriend it would be a lot harder to race."





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Trey had tough times for most of 2009 and even early in 2010 but things turned around in late 2010 when he went on a tear and won the 250cc outdoor title. He moved up to 450s full-time in 2011 and although he wasn't immediately a contender he got there, eventually winning three 450cc supercrosses in his first full season.

But his season ended early when he had a big crash while testing for the outdoors and fractured his femur again – the same one he previously broke at Washougal in 2008. A rod in his femur held it together so that it healed faster than a normal broken femur and he came back about midway through the AMA Nationals and immediately was running on podium pace. But then another fall at Washougal fractured his femur again, ending his season.

We caught up with the young Honda star – he's just turned 21 – recently to see how he's coming along as we begin to prepare for the 2012 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Series...

DBR: How did it feel to win multiple supercross races in a stacked field like we had this past year?
TC: "Last year was really an amazing year. Looking back at it, I think we came in probably as prepared as we could be. I thought that right off the bat I was able to kind of run the pace but I didn't quite have all the other stuff figured out. That's kind of what we expected – we expected to learn a lot and

a lot to unfold throughout the year and it definitely did. Thankfully, I got used to things quick enough to get a win and then kind of kept going from there. There were definitely some extreme lows but I think it was just a rookie learning process and it definitely helped me to get more wins throughout the year."

DBR: You said you could run the pace but there were some things missing. What were they?
TC: "I think the biggest thing, really, was that I did have the speed – it just wasn't extremely consistent and I couldn't really do it completely in a comfort zone that would allow me to race 20 laps like that. I had to get over that, mentally. And it was very difficult for me racing James Stewart and racing Chad Reed and racing all these guys..."

DBR: So you're saying it was hard racing guys that you looked up to for a long time, right?

TC: "Yeah, exactly. I watched Chad Reed and James Stewart when I was on 80s racing amateur and all of a sudden I'm racing them. You're not expected to beat them but my team and my sponsors and even myself want to be out there and win races. In order to do that I'm just going to have to beat guys that I looked up to and admired for a long time."

DBR: I'm sure a lot of people if they put themselves in your shoes are going to know how much they look up to guys including yourself...

TC: "Something I've always tried to do is not let anyone be overrated or feel that anyone is better than any other particular person. I don't look at myself and think I'm better than any other person and those guys are just human beings too. Really, for me, it was just a matter of experience and time."

DBR: You were one of four guys in the mathematical hunt for the title when you got hurt. How did you handle the disappointment?

TC: "It was difficult. I was just so excited. I had just recently won two awesome Main Events and I was having a really good time outdoor testing. I was feeling probably the best I've ever felt on the outdoor track. Things were just clicking. It was just devastating. Not only did I lose my shot at the title but I was really content with just finishing out the season good so that was just the biggest bummer for me to not be able to finish the season. And then, also, to lose a spot in the outdoors. It was a bummer but I still had so much positive to look at. There wasn't too much to get down about. I was pretty thankful..."

DBR: I heard a couple of people throw around the name Ricky Carmichael as a comparison for how fast you were going during outdoor testing...

TC: "[Laughs] Yeah, I don't know – the two days that I was testing outdoors before I got hurt, it was definitely the best that I've ever been outdoors. Everything was just really clicking. It's a bummer that none of it was carried through to outdoors. But I think I've learned a lot in the whole process and I think it will make me stronger in the long run."

DBR: There was a lot of speculation about your injury being the same break as before, so was it?
TC: "No. The one that happened at Washougal [in 2011] is a different break from the original break [during 2011 outdoor testing] but it was in a very similar area on the lower shaft of my femur. That was holding a rod in place and basically it broke on that screw. But, yeah, it was kind of a rough deal because people really thought that I went back too early or that I wasn't ready. It looked bad on Honda





has become one of the most well known brands on the market. The 'Big G' brand is now a very common sight around the MX scene and is growing year on year. The boots have been worn this year by Martin Barr who has achieved some fantastic results in the Red Bull and Maxxis series, Bryan Mackenzie who won the British Master MX2 Class. Ryan Houghton who collected the British MXY2 class this year and various others, MRS and Gaerne would like to congratulate all our riders this year on their fantastic results and hope 2012 will be just as good!

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DBR: What was amazing was that there were kind of two packs of racers at that point – the Ryans and Chad out front and then everybody else. When you showed up you were immediately in the mix with those three guys.

TC: "I think that I wanted to just get through the first

race. You always go out there to win. If it's possible you're going to do everything you can to win. But I was going to be happy with a top five and a third definitely kind of went above and beyond my expectations. I was ecstatic over that weekend."

DBR: Is there something bad about Washougal for you? After all you've broken your femur there

TC: "No. There's no particular reason behind it. I think it just happens to be just a coincidence. I had a great year there in 2010. It's just a freak deal that happened. I've just got to take what I can from it and make the best of the options. Go with the place I'm in now.

DBR: I was told that the testing crash happened because you were scrubbing a jump and clipped it and that's definitely what happened at

Washougal, too...
TC: "Well, the first one, I don't know about that... I know there was a lot of talk on the internet about the first one that I scrubbed and that's why I crashed. That really had nothing to do with it. The first one it was a really big step-down and I landed just a little past the downside. My front end kind of tucked in the braking bumps - it had nothing to do with scrubbing. The second one, though, definitely. I think that was obviously my mistake.

"I think that particular race I was doing really good. I was really excited about the way the bike was working. I might have just wanted something a little too soon. I was really anxious to race with the Ryans and I felt like, at that point, I was going to be able to. Maybe I just let that get me a little ahead of myself."

DBR: How is the healing coming?
TC: "It's good! The healing process has been slow just being that it was broken in a very similar location. So same bone twice and not even a couple months apart - it's going to take a while for it to deal with the trauma. That's basically the

healing process. I feel like now that we've kind of anticipated that we're on schedule. We'll just see where it goes with the doctors. I'm not going to do anything risky or dangerous. I've just got to be patient and trusting and do the best I can."

DBR: Do you know if it's possible that you'll miss

any of the supercross season?

TC: "I don't believe so. I mean, it is possible anything is possible. But I really hope to be at Anaheim 1. Right now I feel like we're on a schedule that will lead to that. But you never know what can happen. I'm just going to ride with whatever does happen and do the best that I can."

DBR: You just turned 21 – when are you going to

start drinking and gambling? TC: "[Laughs] I don't know. I've never been into it. I've never really had a desire to do anything like that. I'm content with the life and everything that's in it. I don't think I need to complicate it.'

DBR: Everybody has their vices – what are yours? TC: "Ice cream, for sure. Ice cream is definitely my vice. But right now I could use a ride. That would be better than any ice cream or any sort of alcohol anyone could ever want."







BULL KTM RED

#5 RYAN DUNGEY: 450 SXF #38 MARVIN MUSQUIN: 250 SXF #70 KEN ROCZEN: 250 SXF

Ryan Dungey was rumoured to be going to KTM basically since Roger De Coster went to KTM prior to the 2011 season and it panned out. In the 250 class these two young racers represent the last three MX2 world championships with Musquin winning in 2009 and 2010 and Roczen doing likewise in 2011. But, interestingly enough, Roczen now has more SX experience than Musquin as Roczen raced nearly the entire Lites West series in 2011 while Musquin missed his rookie SX season after blowing out his knee at the Bercy Supercross prior to the 2011 season.

Musquin's luck went south again at round two outdoors in Texas when Justin Barcia crashed violently in front of him and Barcia's bike cleaned Musquin off of his bike, breaking his thumb pretty badly. Still, Musquin grabbed podiums at the end of the season and he'll be strong indoors and out if he's healthy. The same goes for Roczen. If you're wondering how Roczen got a two-digit number when he didn't race outdoors and Lites SX races don't pay points toward AMA National numbers, remember when he raced a KTM 350 SXE to seventh at the Heustes SX and start the strong that the Heustes SX and the start of the same sext and the

raced a KTM 350 SXF to seventh at the Houston SX and eighth three weeks later in Daytona? He'll be a guy to beat in 2012, indoors and out.

TEAM HONDA/MUSCLE MILK

#41 TREY CANARD: CRF450R #10 JUSTIN BRAYTON: CRF450R

Muscle Milk has followed Brayton from team to team since he was at KTM a few years ago. They followed him from KTM to JGR Yamaha and now to Honda. Muscle Milk is loyal to Brayton and when they heard he was switching teams they apparently wanted to stick with him. The team's complete for 2012 with Brayton and Canard.

GEICO HONDA

#14 KEVIN WINDHAM: CRF450R #17 ELI TOMAC: CRF250R #20 (#1E) JUSTIN BARCIA: CRF250R #58 WIL HAHN: CRF250R #49 JUSTIN BOGLE: CRF250R

Justin Barcia is the reigning Lites East SX champ in 2012 but he has raced East the last couple of years and he will likely be moving up to the 450 class in 2013 so expect him not to defend his title if he's healthy for the West Coast series. It's always smart for the racers to do a tour on each coast so that when they move up to the 450cc class they are familiar with all of the tracks.

It will be Bogle's rookie SX season and he will likely race East so he gets more time to prepare - again, depending on how healthy his team-mates are. Eli Tomac finally admitted during the AMA Nationals this year that he really likes supercross so expect him to come out swinging. Then there's Wil Hahn who spent almost the entire 2011 season injured after a fall during practice at Anaheim 1 landed him with a broken back. He has high hopes

And the old guy is returning for 2012 and 2013! Kevin Windham will be racing SX-only but as with the last couple of years may show up outdoors if needed. He's almost 34 now, after all, which is like being a senior citizen in MX. But Windham is still very good, very fast, very competitive and – maybe most importantly – very popular. People just love him.

On the team side - away from the racers - the GEICO team is reportedly making some pretty big changes. First, the team will be stepping away from Pro Circuit as a sponsor for 2012. The way it has always worked at the Factory Connection-owned team is that Pro Circuit would supply engine mods and exhausts to the team and the team would take the engine mods and attempt to make them even stronger with their own R&D with help from the

But for 2012 the GEICO team will be more in-line with the factory Honda team on the technical side of things, running Yoshimura exhausts and engine mods developed internally by Honda or by Yoshimura.

And then there's the riding gear. For the last few years the GEICO team has been sponsored by Fox Racing for riding gear. Fox provided everything but the helmet (Shoei) and boots (Gaerne) in 2009 and in 2010 and 2011 Fox provided the helmets and boots, too. But it seems GEICO wants more branding space so GEICO will be leaving Fox Racing to wear riding gear nearly entirely branded to GEICO with the manufacturer(s) yet to be named.

TLD/LUCAS OIL HONDA

#34 COLE SEELY: CRF250R #51 TRAVIS BAKER: CRF250R #43 CHRISTIAN CRAIG: CRF250R

The TLD/Lucas Oil Honda team returns unchanged for 2012 and for good reason. Baker is a promising talent, as is Christian Craig who was impressive – although pretty hot-or-cold – outdoors on a 450 in 2011. And Cole Seely? He won the inaugural Los Angeles Supercross at Dodgers Stadium, filled in on a 450 with Team Honda in 2011 and backed that up with another Lites SX win in Seattle. He's a gamer indoors. He very well could be a

Rumour has it this team, which has always used Pro Circuit not only for exhaust but for motor mods and suspension mods, had been testing exhausts for 2012 but they're sticking with PC as it turns out.

JGR YAMAHA

#7 JAMES STEWART: YZ450F #18 DAVI MILLSAPS: YZ450F

Stewart is a done deal for JGR - which is huge and then to add in proven winner Davi Millsaps is just icing on the cake. Millsaps rode for JGR in 2011 and was putting in some pretty great rides outdoors before he got hurt. As for Stewart, he reportedly really likes the bike more than the one he was racing for L&M Racing so he hopes to improve. And he should be racing outdoors. The last time he did that he won every moto in 2008







MONSTER ENERGY/ PRO CIRCUIT KAWASAKI

#25 BROC TICKLE: KX450F #12 BLAKE BAGGETT: KX250F #15 DEAN WILSON: KX250F #28 TYLA RATTRAY: KX250F #35 DARRYN DURHAM: KX250F

When three of the four 250cc racers on your team have permanent numbers that says something. Blake Baggett earned his new permanent number this year after winning a number of AMA Nationals and finishing near the front in the points and he'll be trying to channel his inner Jake Weimer who won the Lites West for Pro Circuit with the #12 in 2010. Dean Wilson could've picked a single-digit permanent

Dean Wilson could've picked a single-digit permanent number from here on out since he's a national champ now (he will be running the number one outdoors) but the only numbers available are #4 (who wants to be the first guy to pick that number up?), #6 and #8 and apparently Deano didn't like any of the above so he chose to stick with #15 which served him pretty well in 2011. And Rattray's #28 is also permanent.

Wilson will be looking to pull down his first indoor title this year – as will Baggett – and both will be motivated. I would bet that PC will split these two up, sending one East and one West if they can. Both of them have only raced east and it will be both of their third seasons racing SX so if either one wins a title they'll be bumped to the 450 class in 2013 no matter what. This creates an interesting dilemma as they will undoubtedly both plan on winning a title and both want to get experience on the West Coast tracks before moving up to 450s.

the West Coast tracks before moving up to 450s.

As for Rattray, he just wants more SX experience and he would probably be happy to race East as he raced West in 2011 in his first-ever attempt at racing SX. Rattray may move up to a 450 for outdoors.

And Durham is going to be fun to watch this year. He was very, very fast on basically privateer equipment all year and was rewarded with a Pro Circuit ride so the question is going to be about how he handles the pressure. Finishing fifth on privateer equipment is like a win but finishing fifth on PC equipment is like missing the Main. Durham suffered a broken wrist in November so while he will probably be pretty well healed by Anaheim 1 chances are good he'll be racing East.

healed by Anaheim 1 chances are good he'll be racing East. Winning the 2011 Lites West title was a blessing and a curse for Broc Tickle. Winning a title is always good but according to the AMA rules he's ineligible to race a 250F indoors in 2012. But it looks like Mitch Payton and his Pro Circuit team are putting together a 450 effort for 2012. The 450 side of the team will either see Tickle on a 450 indoors and outdoors by himself, Tickle on a 450 indoors and a 250F outdoors while Tyla Rattray races a 250F indoors and then a 450 outdoors or Tickle race a 450 indoors and outdoors and have Rattray join him on a 450 outdoors.

HART & HUNTINGTON KAWASAKI

#9 IVAN TEDESCO: KX450F #75 JOSH HILL: KX450F #83 KYLE PARTRIDGE: KX450F #100 JOSH HANSEN: KX450F

Title sponsors are still coming in for Hart & Huntington but one of them is likely to be Sycuan Casino. The casino came on as a personal sponsor for Kyle Partridge this year during SX and as part of Sycuan's deal with H&H they wanted to make sure Partridge had a place on the team which originally was only going to consist of Tedesco. Hill and Hansen.

as part of Sycuan's dear with PART they wanted to make sure Partridge had a place on the team which originally was only going to consist of Tedesco, Hill and Hansen.

Hill is going to be fast if he's healthy, Tedesco will be solid, Partridge is going to have a real shot at doing something on a good bike and Hansen is the question mark as his speed isn't a question, nor his talent but off-the-track distractions continue to be a possible issue for him. There's no question that he can do well, the question is whether or not he actually will.

L&M/JEFF WARD RACING KAWASAKI

#11 KYLE CHISHOLM: KX450F #33 JOSH GRANT: KX450F

Mike Kranyak – the M (for Mike) in L&M (Larry & Mike) – is returning with his team in 2012 and beyond. He has teamed up with Jeff Ward to put together a team and they landed a couple of solid contenders in Josh Grant and Kyle Chisholm.

Grant is a guy who has ridiculous speed and could win any given race and Chisholm is a guy who is always fast and always solid and predictable. Kranyak was a sponsor/supporter of Josh Grant back when he was racing amateurs and Grant is a guy with a big upside. The team will race indoors and outdoors. Also, most of the team at L&M looks like it's staying together with long-time mechanic Paul Delaurier taking over managerial duties. Delaurier is a perfect fit for the job as he's smart, nice and very level-headed.





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SAN MANUEL HONDA

#29 ANDREW SHORT: CRF450R

#36 KYLE REGAL (MAYBE): CRF450R

This new team with an old sponsor and old owner will be on Hondas in 2012. Why? Jeremy McGrath has a lot to do with it. McGrath is still a big-time name for Honda and one of the manufacturer's primary test riders. He's also the co-owner of this team along with old friend Larry Brooks. They have definitely signed Andrew Short for 2012 and Short will be returning to race the full-on factory Hondas that he raced prior to 2011. Regal is the rumoured second rider but it's not done yet. He was Brooks' pet project in 2011 and he could remain so in 2012.

DRAGON RACING FUELS/AG MOTORSPORTS/CERNIC'S KTN

#40 GANNON AUDETTE: 250 SXF

Gannon Audette is good friends with the Dungey clan and also hails from Minnesota. After some signs of brilliance separated by quite a few lacklustre performances in his rookie 2011 season, Audette will be getting KTM support through Cernic's and you can bet he will be spending as much time as possible with Dungey preparing for his second assault on the pro ranks.

NICK WEY'S KAWASAKI TEAM

#27 NICK WEY: KX450F

Wey was at the Monster Energy Cup on a KX450F that was essentially self-sponsored but in 2012 rumour has it that he may be hooking back up with the Ti-Lube guys to race a Kawasaki like he did in 2010 when he ended up being a replacement rider at the Monster Energy Kawasaki team for a big chunk of the year. This is all still to be finished off, though, so things could change.

MONSTER ENERGY KAWASAKI

#1 RYAN VILLOPOTO: KX450F #21 JAKE WEIMER: KX450F

This team has both riders returning for 2012. Weimer had a multi-year deal coming into 2011 and Villopoto was a no-brainer to be re-signed for 2012 having won both titles. They will have a new team manager, though, as Mike Fisher was let go after the 2011 season.

JDR MOTORSPORTS/JSTAR KTM

#37 MALCOLM STEWART: 250 SXF #927 PJ LARSEN: 250 SXF #TBD MATT MOSS: 250 SXF #TBD RYAN MARMONT: 250 SXF

After a promising rookie season Malcolm Stewart finds his way onto the JDR KTM team which is good because he's a big guy and KTMs are notorious for their power output. Some people were suggesting that he just join onto whatever team his brother was racing in 2012 and race 450s due to his size but the Joe Gibbs Racing team isn't necessarily that kind of operation where James Stewart can decide other racers.

PJ Larsen will be returning with the team in 2012 as well and if he's healthy he will surprise some people. And then there's Matt Moss, take two. It's his second time attempting to make the leap from Australia to the USA. By all accounts he has the speed and talent, he just has to stay focused and injury-free. Then comes Ryan Marmont, the younger of the two very fast Marmont brothers from Australia. This is a solid squad.

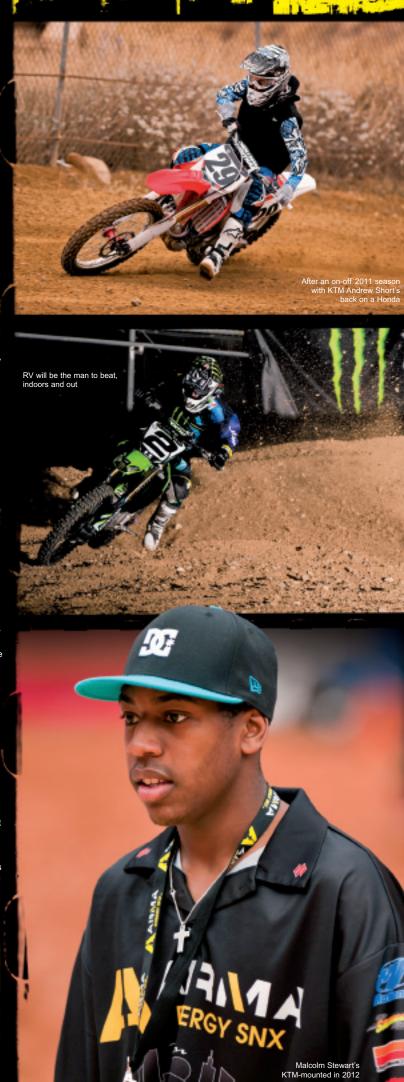
YOSHIMURA SUZUKI

#24 BRETT METCALFE: RM-Z450

This team was officially cut out of Suzuki's budget at the end of 2011 but it was picked up by Yoshimura. The staff should stay mostly intact with the exception of Mike Gosselaar going to TwoTwo Motorsports. Makita or Rockstar – or both – may be out as title sponsors at this point. We have to wait and see what they come up with.

Brett Metcalfe has a two-year deal with Suzuki so no matter what Suzuki had to make sure he could race in 2012, regardless of the team officially folding inside Suzuki corporate. It looks like Metcalfe will be the team's only racer after it just missed out on getting James Stewart.





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#31 MARTIN DAVALOS: RM-Z250 #44 JASON ANDERSON: RM-Z250 #TBD HUNTER HEWITT: RM-Z250 #TBD BLAKE WHARTON: RM-Z250

Martin Davalos will be returning for yet another run at the Lites class indoors and out. He is always very fast but his racing has yet to come together for him consistently on the weekends. He showed a lot of grit in 2011, though, standing on the podium at Unadilla after losing a front tooth in practice when a rock hit him in the mouth and if he carries that kind of determination into SX he could be dangerous.

Jason Anderson took a little time off during his rookie pro season in 2011 after his friend lan Trettel was seriously hurt at Daytona. Trettel's injury took a big toll on Anderson and he had to do some soul-searching but he returned to put in some solid rides during the Nationals. They will be rejoined by Hunter Hewitt, the son of team owner Bobby Hewitt, in 2012. Hunter wasn't part of the team in 2011 but put in some rides better than the entire team so perhaps he proved it wasn't totally nepotism that got him the ride in 2010.

And then there's Blake Wharton. Wharton is a weird guy. He's very, very talented and he has proven himself as a guy with the potential to win races when he's motivated to do so. He took off most of 2011 with the GEICO Honda team to fix a shoulder injury but it was likely just as much to get his head straight.

BBMX SUZUKI

#26 MICHAEL BYRNE: RM-Z450 #48 JIMMY ALBERTSON: RM-Z450 #66 JASON THOMAS: RM-Z450

Byrne is returning for 2012 alongside Jason Thomas for the Butler Brothers. And they're adding former GP racer and American heart-throb Jimmy Albertson. Thomas spent much of 2011 dealing with a knee injury that resulted from James Stewart landing on his back in Houston but he was out on the track at the Monster Energy Cup.

Byrne is solid although he's getting up there in years. Both of them are, actually. But the BBMX guys are loyal and they want guys that can put their bikes in Main Events and both Byrne and Thomas should be capable of that. The young talent is coming in the form of Albertson. His girlfriend is English but he won't let that slow him down.

MOTOCONCEPTS RACING SUZUKI

#57 JAKE CANADA RM-Z450 #800 MIKE ALESSI RM-Z450 #801 JEFF ALESSI RM-Z450

The Alessis joined the team after they already had an agreement with Canada and the Alessis insisted on racing Suzukis. David Vuillemin left the team as team manager over the Alessi thing because Vuillemin used to be a trainer/riding coach for Alessi and never felt like he could be effective because Tony – Mike's dad – always had a say in what DV was helping Mike with.

VALLI/STAR RACING YAMAHA

#50 NICO IZZI: YZ450F #56 AUSTIN STROUPE: YZ450F #65 RYAN MORAIS: YZ450F #19 KYLE CUNNINGHAM: YZ250F #23 GARETH SWANEPOEL: YZ250F #53 RYAN SIPES: YZ250F #96 KYLE PETERS: YZ250F

There have been rumours of Yamaha teams merging for like a decade now and it finally happened! This is at least the third-best rider line-up in the Lites class this year and maybe even second-best to the Pro Circuit team depending on how you look at it.

Kyle Cunningham was the top racer in the AMA 250cc Nationals not on the Pro Circuit team for nearly the entire series. If not for a really tough day at Southwick he would've been fourth in points but finished three points behind Tomac in the title chase. Then there's Gareth Swanepoel who was the only racer not on a PC Kawasaki to win a moto in 2011. He finished sixth in points outdoors and hopes to make a splash indoors at his first attempt at racing SX.

Ryan Sipes was sick throughout a lot of the outdoors but landed a podium in the first moto at RedBud. Indoors, though, Sipes was strong in 2011, winning the Indianapolis SX as well as the much-hyped East/West Shootout in Las Vegas. Those three are joined by Kyle Peters in his first full season of pro racing.

It will be Ryan Morais' first year in the 450 class but he should be the most mature in that group with Nico Izzi and Austin Stroupe on the team. Hiring both of them is a bit like hiring Harry and Lloyd from Dumb & Dumber. But make no mistake, they can both haul ass – especially Stroupe.





Motoconcepts Racing Suzuki's new signing Mike Alessi





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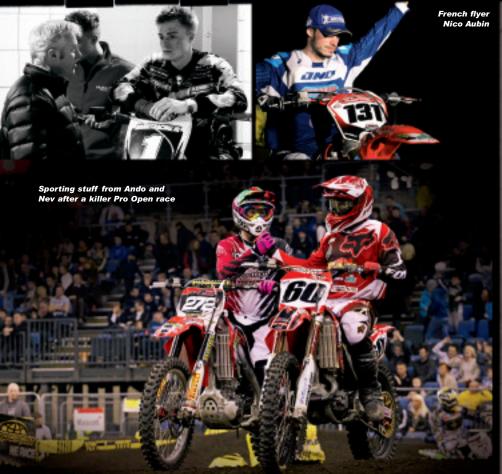
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fter a pretty stellar night of racing at the season opener in Sheffield little over a month ago the Future West ACU British Supercross Championship heads to Belfast for round two of a now shortened four-round series. Always a popular attraction inside the Odyssey, this year's supercross is no different with a very vocal and passionate set of fans filling the seats.

The action comes thick and fast from the off with more thrills, spills and pant-cleaning bills than your average race event. The opening Lites heat sees 2003 FWSX champ Lewis Gregory eat s**t after clipping neutral in the rhythm section and local favourite Ed Allingham and gnarly old vet Ryan Voase lay hands on each other in the second after coming together in the last turn and going down.

However, despite all the drama and dirt diggers pretty much everyone you'd expect to make the 12-man Main makes it bar reigning Open champ Tom Church who has a double disaster. On the flipside former CCM team-mate Stephen Sword finally makes it to a Main as he transfers through the first of the two LCQs in the final transfer position.

When the gate drops for the 15-lap final it's fast Frenchie Nico Aubin who takes the holeshot on the Buildbase Honda with Neville Bradshaw, Stephen Sword, Stuey Edmonds and Martin Barr all right there. Despite Bradshaw – who's stuffed full of his mom's home cooking - pushing hard all race long he can't get close enough to Aubin to attempt or pull off a pass and that's how it stays to the end.



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RESULTS

PRO OPEN 1 Brad Anderson

Neville Bradshaw

Tom Church Nico Aubin

Evo-Tech Stevens Honda HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK Norman Watt Kawasaki

Buildbase Honda

Gordon Crockard

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Anderson 47, 2 Church 40, 3 Bradshaw 37, 4 Aubin 34, 5 Edmonds 29

PRO LITES
1 Nico Aubin

Neville Bradshaw Martin Barr

Stephen Sword Stuart Edmonds Buildbase Honda Evo-Tech Stevens Honda

LPE Kawasaki TAS Suzuki Maxxis Apico Suzuki

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Aubin 47, 2 Bradshaw 47, 3 Brunell 30, 4 Greedy 30, 5 Dunn 26











Swordy and Barr fight over third with the now LPE Kawasaki-mounted Irishman finally snatching the final podium position from the rejuvenated Scot who's starting to look more at home on the TAS Suzuki now he's got the non-Main-making-monkey off his back. With the top four sorted Swordy's future TAS team-mate Stuey 162ey fights for fifth with reigning Lites champ Jack Brunell with the nod finally going to the Irish hero after a bar-bangin' battle.

The Belfast result makes things a little interesting in the championship chase with things all square at the top at the halfway point of the series. Joint leaders Aubin and Bradshaw sit a massive 17 points clear of Brunell and Belfast head-to-head winner Ashley Greedy while James Dunn is fifth a further four points back. With only two rounds left it's gonna boil down to an Aubin versus Bradshaw chase for the championship at London and Birmingham in the New Year.

The Open class final is all about Brad Anderson who's fully fired up after a coming together with Stuey in their head-to-head which sees Brando go down hard, then attempt to

ghost ride his bike into the Dubliner as the track swings by the site of their original contact. Already sore after the crash, Brad gets a beer soaking from the crowd to add a little insult to his injury too. So yeah, Ando's fully fired up for the final which basically means nobody else is gonna get a look in.

One holeshot and 15 flawless laps see Brad take the win and become the fourth different winner of a Future West final so far this year - that's four different winners in four Main Events all riding Hondas believe it or not. Bradshaw puts in another stunning ride to make a double Honda 1-2 on the night while reigning champ Church takes third ahead of Gordy Crockard and Aubin who battles through

the midpack carnage for fifth.

Added to his second in Sheffield, Ando takes control of the series and sits on a seven-point lead. However, nobody's quite sure when the Aussie-bound Brit is leaving these shores for Down Under and if he'll even line up in London and Birmingham for rounds three and four. Whatever, it's gonna be tight with TC, Bradshaw and Aubin all poised and ready to strike...



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AM-DRAM!

YOUTH, AMATEUR AND FOUR-WHEELER CLASS ROUND-UP...

After early race leader Luke Williamson tips over the way's clear for Buster Hart to take a well-deserved – and well-celebrated – win ahead of Bobby Bruce and Liam Brosnan in the Auto class.

Twisted 7 Kawasaki teamster Harry Kimber picks up where he left off in Sheffield with another win. He's joined on the rostrum by Rossi Beard and Callum Beeken while super-consistent Reegan Brooks picks up another fourth just like he did in Sheffield to take the runner-up spot in the series standings at the halfway point.

Taylor Hammal proves too good in the SW85cc class as he takes a dominant holeshot to chequers win ahead of Luke Reading and Rhys Graham. Littler Hammal now takes a 10-point lead into the second half of the season.

Gradie Featherstone makes up for his Sheffield disappointment by killing 'em in the Supermini division. With the whoop section his round one winner Tom Neal out of the equation Scooter Webster and Joe Jefferies round out the podium making it tight at the top in the Supermini title chase with Jefferies and round out the podium.

Webster leading Featherstone by a single point. In the Youth Lites division James Dunn makes it two wins from two starts as he stretches out his series lead over Belfast runner-up Chris Bayliss and Dan Thornhill. Bayliss bounces back to win the Clubman Lites class ahead of Dan Brough and James Harrison while Christy Harnett takes the Clubman Open class win after Thornhill crashes out of the lead.

The Quad encounter is well worth the price of admission alone as every time Mark Watson lines up to race you know you're guaranteed an absolute epic battle and possibly a crash or takeout move. This time it's Watson who's the victim of his aggressive riding style as he gets tangled up in the Tuff-Blocks trying a desperate last lap pass for the lead. After hitting each and everyone of the foam bales through the whoop section his KTM four-wheeler finally comes to a halt letting pace-setter Michael McAneney take the chequers in style. Justin Reid and round-one winner Jamie Clarke

RESULTS

- **AUTOS** 1 Buster Hart
- Bobby Bruce
- Liam Brosnan
- Luke Williamson
- James Haddow

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Williamson 43, 2 Hart 43,

3 Brosnan 42, 4 Bruce 37, 5 Haddow 25

- Harry Kimber
- Rossi Beard
- Callum Beeken
- Reegan Brookes
- Ben Burridge

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Kimber 50, 2 Brooks 36,

3 Beard 34, 4 Burridge 30, Beeken 29

- Taylor Hammal
- Luke Reading
- Rhys Graham
- Richard Kerr
- Jay Davies

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Hammal 47, 2 Reading 37, 3 Will Keogh 25, 4 Graham 20, 5 Dylan Woodcock 20

- Gradie Featherstone
- Scooter Webster Joe Jefferies

- Karl Noble Chelsea Gowland

SERIES STANDINGS

- 1 Jefferies 42, 2 Webster 42,
- 3 Featherstone 41, 4 Tom Neal 25,
- 5 Noble 18

- **YOUTH LITES** I James Dunn
- Chris Bayliss
- Dan Thornhill
- James Harrison Glen McCormack

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Dunn 50, 2 Thornhill 42, 3 Bayliss 42,

4 Harrison 33, 5 Sam Winterburn 28

CLUBMAN LITES1 Chris Bayliss

- Daniel Brough
- James Harrison
- George Purchase
- Damon Brooks

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Brough 47, 2 Bayliss 47, 3 Harrison 40, 4 Thornhill 31, 5 Ryan Mason 26

- **UBMAN OPEN** Christy Harnett
- Chris Bayliss George Purchase Stuart Morrison

Greg Fisher

SERIES STANDINGS 1 Purchase 45, 2 Morrison 40,

3 Fisher 31, 4 Thornhill 30, 5 Harnett 25

- Michael McAneney
- Justin Reid Jamie Clarke
- Mark Watson
- Conner Smith

SERIES STANDINGS

- 1 Clarke 45, 2 Oliver Sansom 35, 3 Tom Claireaux 30, 4 Scott Sinclair 30,
- 5 McAneney 25





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GRAHAM JARVIS

DBR: How did the event go?
GJ: "I think that it turned out about right
– it had the right severity because all
the riders got through. I believe that it's
been a success. Everyone is smiling,
everyone is enjoying themselves and
the crowd can see a lot of the course
which is important. The riders enjoyed it
– probably a new experience for a lot of
them but I'm sure that everyone did at
least one lap!"

DBR: The future?

GJ: "We're going to run some hare and hound events next year and then try to get the same time of the year to run the extreme. We're looking for a new venue as well but I can't tell you too much..."

DBR: Do you want to take it to an international level?

GJ: "I think that it's probably one of the toughest events in England but I don't think that it's so important to get other riders – we've got a lot of good English riders so it doesn't matter, we can have a good battle between ourselves."

DBR: And how about your race?
GJ: "You're expected to win when
you've been to the ground before so
that's the only problem – a bit of extra
pressure! Dougie Lampkin had to pull
out but Paul Bolton was really fast. He's
had good results in the Romaniacs and
Erzberg so I think that he's also good
when it's a bit faster."





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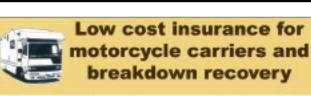












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MX at Wilden Lane and the list of youth champions who made the Kidderminster circuit a base while gearing up for the following season's national effort really is quite impressive.

Ray Rowson, Ashley Greedy, Josh Spinks, Josh Waterman, Lewis King, Connor Walkley, Ryan Houghton, Richie Worrall and Turbo Taylor are just a few names that immediately spring to mind. Today with many more options available the place might not be the off-season seat of power that it once was but already this term the likes of Conrad Mewse, Jack Gardner, Tommy Alba, Liam Knight, Jack Kelly, Dan Thornhill, Robert Yates and David Keet have all left an impressive mark.

Wilden's On! is the new adopted logo and it's absolutely bang-on for the sand-based venue that often completely defies the winter elements. The autumn/winter programme now extends to around 17 events and it's an impressive fact that in the past eight seasons I can only recall the cancellation notices being posted twice - and that was with overnight temperatures dropping as low as -20!

The course at Stipers Hill, Polesworth, is also utilised for a double championship agenda that effectively straddles Christmas - one series before the festive break and one following it. There is also a smaller trainer circuit with its own championships running simultaneously on race days at Wilden Lane - this one absolutely perfect for the autos and beginners.

Tom Arnold is the larger-than-life figure

ake a look back at recent years of winter running the whole shooting match and with 36 years of MX experience under his belt he knows a thing a two about delivering the goods. More than half of those years have been spent at Wilden Lane operating mainly under the ORPA umbrella - and just this year Tom has taken another step forward by purchasing the Wilden land. In light of that and thinking ahead some new ideas are already being bandied about with improved and even permanent infrastructure a real possibility - so watch this space!

As for this current autumn/winter season there's a brilliant new sponsor onboard in the shape of RhinoGoo cleaning products. Combine that with the refreshingly buoyant rider numbers well over the 200 mark - and it almost begs the question 'recession, what recession?'!

Having sung the praises of Wilden Lane it's a curious fact that the most popular event on the WMXC calendar takes place some 100 miles west of base - namely on Barmouth Beach. The beach gig, with a format of six normal length races for all classes set over two days, is a must-do event for most Wilden regulars. The heroes down on the sand this year included Charlie Kent and Dane Reeves in the 65s as Henry Williams (Saturday action only) and Dee Jay Walker aided by James McFayden ruled the roost in the Smallies. Over in the Biggies David Keet with five race wins, Thomas Morgan and Henry Williams in Sunday action only also excelled.

Without any doubt however the finest youth performance of the weekend came courtesy of Jack Kelly when he thoroughly caned the Rookie

class runners in Sunday action - that following an almost as devastating show from Jay Thomas in the same division on day one.

In the on-going RhinoGoo championship stakes Jayden Murphy and Jack Wankling are grabbing most of the Junior 65cc limelight while in the SW85s Alex Walton has been flying the flag best for Wales. Also catching the eye in the Smallies are local lad Jordan Wright, Stoke's Jamie Osborne, Matt Brame and Jack Belford. In the Big Wheels at the time of going to press David Keet travelling from the south coast each weekend together with local youngster Ethan Gatenby have been the regulars impressing the most.

While the lower divisions have rocked the best of the racing action so far has gone off in the Rookie division – perfectly highlighted at round four in October when Liam Knight, Jack Gardner, Ricky Roderick, Luke Newman, Alec Carefoot and Adam Wells were the likely lads straining at the leash.

Rage is well aware of the national capabilities of Gardner, Knight and Newman but definitely watch out for 15-year-old Carefoot - he was the day's section winner and has proved to be an absolute revelation since first throwing a leg over the 250F Honda. Roderick has been hauling his talent around in both the Rookies and two-stroke-only races - and with his low slung corner speed he's been a sublime watch. Catch him in action if you can.

Looking ahead to January 2012 there will be a brand new series kicking off - check out the club website for full details...

VILDEN<mark>MXC</mark>

CHAIRMAN: TOM ARNOLD VICE CHAIRMAN: MARK ARNOLD WEB: WWW.WILDENMXC.CO.UK EMAIL: MARNOLD234@AOL.COM TEL: 0121 5204261/07759 891209







ROBHOLYOAKE#72

t the end of each season Rage likes to seek out and praise an unsung hero and casting a glance down the finalised national charts there are a few battle-scarred warriors who deserve a special mention this year.

Tom Grimshaw in the 65s, Taylor Hammal in the Smallies and Jake Millward in the youth Open class have all turned in superb end-of-term statistics without necessarily grabbing the column inches they fully deserved. I'm sure you can add your own candidates too but let's consider Rob Holyoake who finished second behind Curtis Blamey in the Wulfsport British Masters BW85cc championship and third behind Jack Gardner and Josh Coleman in the BSMA GT Cup.

Now for a guy who just goes out to race for the pure enjoyment of the sport and at the start of the year had no real aspirations for a top three finish that really was an awesome return. With a national silver and bronze proudly emblazoned on his racing CV, Rob now exits the gover the winter." BW ranks and here's what he had to say ...

Rage: Hi Rob, you must be well over the moon with your 2011 results?

RH: "Yeah, I didn't start racing until I was 10 and I broke my hand in 2009 but this year really has been the business with so many great races to look back on."

Rage: Can you pick out any one race in particular as a favourite from either the Masters or GT Cup?

RH: "I think the third race at Hawkstone Park in the Masters is my top pick. What a track to go

well on and I led until half-distance battling with Robbie Dowson and Josh Gilbert. I just couldn't quite manage to hold them off for the win and I eventually finished in third - but as a group we all finished 30 seconds in front of the field. We were really going for it."

Rage: What's the plan from here Rob? RH: "I'm not really big enough to go 250F racing so it will be a 125cc two-stroke. I'm entering for the GT Cup again and hopefully the Masters too but definitely the Phoenix West series is looking good for a go in adult competition as I want to gain my Expert points."

Rage: How does the 125 Suzuki smoker shape up after riding an 85?

RH: "I really like it, it's a lot easier over the big holes and I find it easier to jump too. Overall it just handles a lot better than the smaller bikes but I know I have to beef up a bit physically to get the best out of it - I'm working hard on that

Rage: Finally, have you set yourself any initial goals for 2012?

RH: "No, not really - next year I'm just going to go out and try to ride to the best of my ability and see where I finish come the season's end. I would really like to thank Race Spec for all their help over the past two years - also my mum and dad for putting up with me and Lewis and Al Gregory for their assistance over the second half of this year."

Rage: Nice attitude Rob - thanks for all of that and good luck mate...

















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ollowing half-a-season campaigning a
Proppa.Com KTM, Dan Thornhill returned
to the Suzuki GB youth squad. And
weighing up the possible title contenders
for the 2012 youth Open/Rookie class
championships his name is one to seriously
consider as one of the very best.

Dan always has been a top-drawer attraction, going close to winning a 65cc crown in '05 and was rewarded with an ACU Academy place following his outstanding Small Wheel efforts in the '07 season.

When Dan got caught up in a freak accident at BSMA Wildtracks at the start of the '09 term his BW days were seriously interrupted. But since making his return and moving onto larger capacity machinery it's been glory all the way down the track with back-to-back Wulfsport Masters titles and yet more BSMA finals success.

With next year's youth swansong season in mind Rage tracked Dan down and popped a few pertinent questions...

Rage: Hi Dan, it's been a while since Rage chatted with you last. Are you still at school? DT: "No, I work as an electrical apprentice now with one day spent at college."

Rage: Can you say at the moment if 2012 will be a mix of youth and pro events or solely a youth season? And what was the thinking behind the choices made?

DT: "I'm planning to do a bit of both. Hoping to do the Red Bull Rookies and Maxxis MXY2 while

trying out the pro level in the British Masters and other adult events such as the South West Premier. I chose the youth series because they are where the best riders are going to be and it will give me a true reading of where I lie. And with the pro level I'm doing these for experience and to get a feel of what hopefully lies ahead in the future."

Rage: This one's a standard question Dan – have you set yourself any early targets or goals for 2012?

DT: "Motocross can be very unpredictable but I'm aiming to be running top five in both youth series and to score solid points in every pro ride."

Rage: Both 2010 and 2011 have been really successful years but is there anything that you need to work on before 2012 kicks off?

DT: "Between now and the start of the season I will be mainly working on perfecting my corner speed and all the other finer elements of gaining more speed. I will also be keeping up my fitness in preparation for the new season competing in all the beach races and the supercross series."

Rage: Looking back over your career so far, which has been your favourite race ever?

DT: "Oh no doubt about it, Hawkstone Park this year for the British Masters where Damon Strydom, Bryn Clarke and myself raced flat-out nose-to-tail for the whole 20 minutes. You could have thrown a blanket over the three of us – we

went backwards and forwards but eventually I came out as the victor. Having said that it was awesome to ride at the British GP on the 125."

Rage: Over the past few months you have mixed it up with both two and four-stroke machines – do you have a personal preference?

DT: "No, I really enjoy riding both bikes. I find it good to have a change which makes it much more fun. This year I have raced my usual 250F as well as a 125 smoker at a few races and now I am enjoying the 250 two-stroke for the winter season."

Rage: Looking further ahead Dan where do you see yourself in 2013? Sitting in a Maxxis/Red Bull pit?

DT: "As of now it would be a dream come true. I will give everything I have to try and place myself in that paddock for the 2013 season but again anything could happen."

Rage: So who are the backroom guys who deserve a big slap on the back?

DT: "I would like to thank everyone who has supported me throughout my motocross career especially Suzuki GB, Frampton Damp Proofers, Gaerne, DBMX, RaceFX, Charge Clothing, Simon at Grittenham MX Track and my whole family for their life commitments."

Rage: And finally Dan, one thing that no-one else knows about you?

DT: "I have three alarm clocks and with all that noise I still can't wake up in the mornings!"

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

BRONZED GOD!

AFTER HIS JOLLY HOLS IN MEXICO A SUN-KISSED

Words by **Bryan MacKenzie** Photo by **Sutty**

irst things first, I have a bone to pick and I'm a little disappointed that I have beef with the DBR hierarchy right after the gate dropped on my very first column.

In Lawless' opening spiel last month he warmly introduces me as a new member of the team but while excitedly reading what my new part-time gaffer had to say about me I got slightly hung up about what he meant when he described me as the slightly emaciated Bryan MacKenzie'. It was a new word to me. Something I had never seen or even heard before and it caused me to stall for a second before skipping past like Chad Reed through the whoops.

But once I got to the end I couldn't help but think about the aforementioned word and went back to it. I read over it a few times trying to decipher it myself and hoped that it meant something cool like 'radical dude' or 'handy dirtbike rider' or at the very least 'better of the two back pages columnists'! So naturally I had to Google it and do you know what the word 'emaciated' means? Abnormally thin! The cheeky bar-steward!

Anyway, I'm glad I've got that off my chest. I can only hope now that my new cockalorum (that means well hung - SL) gaffer is a little more flattering towards me in the future...

I spent the tail end of October on holiday in Mexico with my missus, good friend Bunga and his lady Bo (after reading that back you would be forgiven for thinking I went on holiday with the cast from Rainbow) and while we were out there we got caught up in a hurricane. Now it sounds pretty extreme and they certainly geared up for it like it was going to be but when the time came it blew through with about the same weight as a warm fart. In a kind of masochistic way I was pretty pumped for it as I was quite excited to see what it was going to do. They

recorded it as a Category 1 which is the weakest level for a hurricane so I knew no-one was gonna die or anything but it had a name - Rhina and all that good sh*t so I was expecting it to be pretty spectacular. But it wasn't.

So I made it back from Mexico in one piece and had a couple of days extra rest at home before the serious business of next year's preparations kicked off. I just mooched about for a while to pass the time and at one point took a trip along to the Braehead Shopping Centre in Glasgow which is right next to the arena where the Glasgow SX was supposed to be held.

When I walked in I was shocked to be confronted with Santa's grotto and what I'm guessing was a 25-30ft Christmas tree! I know that at this moment in time while you're reading this you probably have your own Christmas tree up in the corner of your front room or something but this was November 1! Now I'm no Scrooge - no siree - but that's a bit early isn't it? It was only just four weeks ago that the final race of the year was in the books and I hadn't even been back in the motherland long enough for my mahogany tan to fade back to my natural pale, snow-camouflage colour.

I was struggling to take it all in. Christmas already! Initially I tried to rationalise it to myself and wondered if maybe the centre manager had the month of November stuck to the back of October on the Hollyoaks calendar he got last Christmas and thought it was December already! But no, it turns out that Christmas just starts that early now. Maybe they brought it forward so that it gets Christmas on your mind early doors so you buy your presents in advance in case the snow comes again and stops Britain just like it did last year. It's all sunk in now though and 'pumped for Christmas' would be an understatement. I love it.

A lot has been going on

really and most of it will be just the same as Tom Motocross, Dick Dirtbike and Harry Scramble have been experiencing. It's gone from holidays, lie-ins and over-eating to training, testing and the occasional presentation. This is what keeps me and probably most of the other guys busy through this time of year as you've probably read by now. Numerous times.

I've took on a helping hand this season with my training in the shape of Freeflow(moto) Kev. It's been a while since I've had help with my programme as l've been doing it all myself for a long time now since Billy and I set up a good, strong routine a handful of years ago. It's faired me well and got me to the level I've reached up to now but I feel if I want to try and take the next step I need to work on areas I haven't before. That's where Kev

He's of the new-school generation and his training techniques are entirely different to anything I've done before. It's tough but one of the greatest benefits to having him around is that no matter how much self-motivation you have you can't beat it when someone is standing over you, watching your every move with no sympathy for your girly whines and cracking the whip to push you past your limits.

There's so much more to tell you but I'll can the rest of it for a rainy day and blog it on my website when I finally get round to revamping it. Be sure to check it out and I'm now gonna do a shameless plug so tune in to One-twenty-one.com and follow me on Twitter by searching for

Ciao gringos, have a merry Christmas and kickass New Year...







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